

Final Project Report:

**First National Conference for Educators of
Newcomer Students
and
Pilot Study on Newcomer Program Literacy and
Assessment Practices**

**Prepared for the
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Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
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INTRODUCTION

Across the nation's school districts, the number of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds has risen dramatically. They represent the fastest growing segment of the student population by a wide margin. From the 1991–1992 school year through 2001–2002, the number of limited English proficient (LEP) students in public schools grew 96%, while total enrollment increased only 12% (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2002). In at least 15 states, LEP enrollment grew 200%.

The rise in the number of immigrant students conforms to the increase in the overall immigrant population in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau (Jamieson, Curry, & Martinez, 2001) determined that in 1999, 20% of all school-aged children had at least one parent who was an immigrant, and 5% of the students were immigrants themselves. However, 65% of Hispanic students and 88% of Asian and Pacific Islander students had at least one immigrant parent. Many of these students are not proficient in English and require language support services in school. Although not all Hispanic or Asian students have limited proficiency in English, Hispanic students make up 75% of all students in English as a second language (ESL), bilingual, and other English language support programs, according to *Latinos in Education* (1999).

The academic performance of children who learn English as a new language varies from that of native-English-speaking students. While they have better attendance rates on average than U.S.-born students, their dropout rates are higher and vary by immigrant group (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Waggoner, 1999). Hispanics have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic or racial group. In 1998, 30% of all Hispanics aged 16–24 dropped out of school. For blacks, the rate was 14%, less than half the Hispanic rate, and for whites, the rate was 8%, almost four times less. Of particular note is that the dropout rate for immigrant Hispanics was 44%, double that of native born Hispanics (21%) (*Latinos in Education*, 1999).

There is a serious disparity between the distribution of language resources and the grade-level distribution of immigrant children according to Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix (2000). They report that a higher percentage of foreign-born immigrants attend secondary schools in comparison to elementary schools, yet spending on language acquisition programs is concentrated in elementary schools. As a result, a significantly smaller proportion of secondary school English language learners receives language support services (e.g., ESL or bilingual education), creating

a mismatch between the number and needs of immigrant middle and high school students and the fiscal resources targeted for them.

Of particular concern are immigrant students who have not had consistent schooling experiences in their native countries and whose knowledge base is several years behind that of their grade-level peers. These students may also be illiterate or semi-literate in their native language and usually have no English proficiency. Traditional ESL and bilingual programs have not always been successful in meeting their academic and cultural orientation needs, so a number of districts have designed an additional program (often, but not always, named *newcomer program*) to meet their needs. This model is one that educates recent immigrant students in a special academic environment for a limited period of time. The newcomer courses are designed to accelerate the students' English language and literacy skills, close some gaps in their content knowledge, and orient them to schooling and life in the United States. Newcomer programs prepare students to make a successful transition into language support (e.g., ESL or bilingual) or mainstream programs.

In the United States, a few newcomer programs for secondary students have been in existence since the late 1970s. However, the research study "Newcomers: Language and Academic Programs for Recent Immigrants," conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) for the national Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE) revealed that over 70% of the 115 programs studied were established in the 1990s (Short & Boyson, 2000a). Many of these programs operated in isolation and designed their courses and procedures without models. Educators in districts with growing numbers of newcomers were eager to learn from the experience of others, but had little opportunity to access that information or learn of other existing programs. They relied on ad hoc associations they created on their own. They also contacted CAL for guidance and technical support, but CAL's resources to assist them have been limited.

Project Goals

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for LEP Students (OELA) helped respond to the needs of school districts by supporting the "Newcomer Conference and Pilot Study" project at CAL. The goals of this 2-year project, which began in September 2001, were 1) to plan and

convene a national conference for educators of newcomer students and 2) to conduct a pilot study on effective literacy and assessment practices in newcomer programs.

These goals emerged from the findings of the national CAL/CREDE research study on secondary newcomer programs, a 4-year research project that identified and documented middle and high school newcomer programs around the United States through survey and case study methodologies. The research recorded the range of program designs and implementation features in operation at different newcomer centers. During the course of the research, it became obvious that many of these programs had been established with minimal or no knowledge of other programs already in operation. Hence, they were designed and operated in isolation, not having access to the curricula or staffing designs that other programs had established. Furthermore, this research revealed that newcomer programs represent a relatively new program model that is usually a subset of larger ESL or bilingual programs in school districts. In consequence, newcomer programs have not received much attention from the professional education community in terms of conferences, research articles, or teacher development.

Although the focus of the initial CAL/CREDE research study was on secondary school newcomer programs, educators who communicated with CAL staff expressed much interest in programs that serve elementary newcomer students also. Like secondary newcomer students, elementary school newcomers may arrive with little or no previous schooling, may also be significantly behind their peers in grade-level content area knowledge, and may lack literacy skills in their native language as well as in English. Furthermore, young elementary school newcomer students may or may not have fully developed native language skills, making the process of English language acquisition even more complex. In addition, elementary school newcomers and their families often need assistance and instruction in learning about U.S. culture, expectations of schools, and other cultural orientation issues that are geared for young learners and that take into the account the cognitive abilities and unique characteristics of younger children.

Many elementary newcomer programs exist across the United States, some in collaboration with secondary newcomer programs in the same school district and some independently. The teachers, administrators, and district-level organizers of these programs demonstrated a strong interest in participating in the conference and pilot study. They expressed a clear desire to learn more about the best practices and successful strategies of other elementary newcomer programs. In response, CAL staff planned a selection of conference sessions

specifically for educators of newcomer students in elementary schools. In addition, programs with elementary newcomer components were included in the site visits associated with the pilot study.

This report describes the activities and research associated with the *First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students* and the pilot study on newcomer program literacy and assessment practices. The pilot study identified promising practices that are used in several different models of newcomer programs in the hope that these practices be shared with educators in other newcomer programs across the country to assist them as they seek to initiate a program or improve an existing one to help new immigrant students achieve high levels of success in school.

FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATORS OF NEWCOMER STUDENTS

The First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students was held on September 26–27, 2002 in Washington, DC. The conference program was designed to offer sessions that would address issues at the various grade levels, Kindergarten through Grade 12. This conference offered a unique and much needed opportunity for researchers, administrators, and teachers to come together to share best practices and innovative reforms of programs serving newcomer students, to learn how to start a program, to raise challenges to implementing a program, and to seek suggestions and solutions. The keynote address on adolescent literacy was given by Dr. Alfredo Schifini (Professor of Education, California State University in Los Angeles). The OELA staff's featured presentation on the *No Child Left Behind Act* provided educators with a venue in which to discuss the issues related to this new legislation. In addition, 51 educators who are involved in teaching, program administration, research, and professional development for newcomer programs presented on a variety of topics. Publishers with materials suitable for newcomer students staffed exhibits.

Announcements of the conference were publicized broadly among language minority education professionals through newsletters, Web sites, electronic lists, and conference exhibits. Nearly 250 teachers and administrators from 24 states and the District of Columbia attended this conference. Representatives from abroad (Canada and Japan) were also present. Based on inquiries received, approximately double the number of participants would have attended if registration had not been limited. This overwhelming response indicated the strong need that educators felt for a professional development forum on such a compelling issue.

Conference proceedings (Boyson, Coltrane, & Short, 2003) were prepared using notes, transcripts, and handouts from the sessions. The session summaries in the conference proceedings were categorized by themes, such as research on newcomer students and programs, elementary and secondary school program design, curriculum and instructional practices, addressing the needs of students with interrupted schooling, assessment and evaluation, and staff development. The conference proceedings have been prepared in a portable document format (pdf) suitable for publication and are available on the CAL and NCELA (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition) Web sites, www.cal.org and www.ncela.gwu.edu respectively.

The conference provided an important venue for networking among the participants, and the subsequent conference proceedings offer a means for extending the information shared at the conference to more educators across the United States. Conference evaluations were highly positive and participants requested that another conference be held the following year. They gave recommendations on additional topics to explore and speakers to invite. Many participants suggested a longer conference with multiple presentations on some topics. The success of the conference confirmed the pressing challenge that many districts across the United States face as they address the educational needs of newly arrived students, especially those with low literacy skills and limited formal education.

PILOT STUDY ON NEWCOMER PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND LITERACY PRACTICES

Research Design and Methodology

Background

As mentioned in the introduction, a newcomer program, in general, is one that educates recent immigrant students who have little or no English language proficiency and who often have had limited formal education in their native countries. Students generally remain in this specialized academic environment for a limited period of time. As of the 1999–2000 school year, the CAL/CREDE newcomer study had profiled 115 secondary school newcomer programs across the United States. Data from these programs revealed that they were serving approximately 15,000 middle and high school students (Short & Boyson, 2000a). Since then, the number has continued to increase with the establishment of new programs and new classes within existing sites.

The U.S. Department of Education has been interested in the potential that newcomer centers offer to new immigrant students when they are placed in a learning environment that addresses their language and literacy needs. This interest led to the second project goal, the pilot research study that CAL has conducted to identify, document, analyze, and disseminate information about effective program approaches to literacy development and assessment for newcomer students. The pilot study builds on the previous CAL/CREDE research on secondary newcomer programs in the United States. With the additional research, educators will better understand the best approaches for meeting the literacy and academic needs of this growing student population. The results of these efforts will augment the information shared at the 2002 newcomer conference and provide increased support to educators of newcomer students across the United States.

Literacy and assessment are critical areas of attention for newcomer students, especially in light of recent educational reforms and the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Academic literacy in English is essential for students to succeed in school but the best approaches for teaching English language learners are not clear. Further, it is very difficult to accurately assess newcomer students' knowledge of content areas if the tests are in English and the students have no or very little proficiency in the language. Therefore, OELA requested that CAL identify promising intake/placement procedures and classroom-based assessment practices for newcomer programs

that might help educators to observe what the students know and can do with their knowledge in a school setting, including assessment practices that measure newcomer students' reading skills, English language development, and content knowledge.

Research Questions

During the 2001–2002 and 2002–2003 school years, CAL staff conducted the pilot study on literacy and assessment practices in newcomer programs at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. In order to examine promising practices in newcomer programs, the study investigated the following research questions:

1. What instructional practices are newcomer programs using to develop students' literacy and academic skills?
2. How do programs assess newcomer students and how do the programs use information from the assessments?
3. What kinds of data do programs gather as indicators of student progress?
4. What gains in scores show reasonable progress for newcomer students?

Data Collection and Analysis

CAL employed the following process to study literacy and assessment practices:

- ♦ identify districts with promising literacy practices in their programs and assessment practices in their intake centers,
- ♦ conduct visits to selected sites for data collection, and
- ♦ analyze and interpret the data.

At selected sites that met the research criteria upon initial examination, CAL staff

- ♦ visited literacy instruction classrooms and intake centers,
- ♦ interviewed teachers, students, and other staff,
- ♦ examined materials used for literacy instruction and assessment, and
- ♦ gathered existing school data showing student progress.

Selection of Intake Centers for Site Visits

Many newcomers who arrive in U.S. school districts go to an intake center for their initial assessment and placement. To identify these centers, CAL staff reviewed the profiles in

the *Directory of Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: Revised 2000* (Short & Boyson, 2000a) and networked with presenters at the *First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students* and with members of CAL's Web-based discussion groups. Three intake centers were identified as meeting the research criteria. The sites were contacted and visits were arranged. During the site visits, staff at the centers shared information about assessment instruments, placement procedures, follow-up monitoring and ongoing support for newcomer students, and parent orientation programs offered at the centers.

Selection of Newcomer Programs for Site Visits

For this study, CAL sought programs that were successfully helping students develop English language skills and, in some cases, native language literacy skills as well. Preferred programs were ones that evaluated student progress in an ongoing manner to help identify what is working well or not working in their programs as a basis for improvement. Academic literacy strategies, which often involve some teaching of content through sheltered instruction (in English) or through the native language, were also identified. Curricula and other materials were examined at some newcomer sites to determine their usefulness.

CAL updated the Newcomer Program Survey Questionnaires from the CAL/CREDE study with additional questions on literacy and assessment practices (see Appendix A). Questionnaires were distributed in 2001–2002 and 2002–2003 to the 115 newcomer programs profiled in CAL's database of secondary newcomer programs. The questionnaires were also made available at the *First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students* for elementary and secondary school programs not yet profiled in CAL's database. Returned surveys were analyzed for literacy and assessment practices and potential study sites. Programs that provided extensive responses to the questions on these areas and appeared to have developed and implemented successful, research-based strategies for literacy and assessment practices for newcomer students were selected for further examination.

As another step in the identification and selection process, CAL staff conducted a thorough review of the documents and data collected for programs profiled in the *Directory of Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: Revised 2000* (Short & Boyson, 2000a) to match the research criteria—effective programmatic designs and instructional methods in the areas of literacy development and student assessment. CAL staff also reviewed handouts and

other resources from the *First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students* presentations that focused on literacy and assessment practices.

Through this process, seven programs were selected for follow-up questions and informal interviews. Questions asked in these interviews included the following:

- What assessments are used for student placement and for determining progress in reading, writing, math, and other content areas?
- What type of professional development do newcomer teachers receive on literacy instruction and assessment?
- Which literacy activities do teachers use every day? Less often? Which ones seem effective?
- How much time do teachers spend each day on activities that develop phonemic awareness? decoding skills? fluency? vocabulary? comprehension? What scaffolding techniques do they use? What reading strategies do they teach to students?
- How do teachers use technology to teach literacy?
- What is the connection between the grade-level curriculum, standards, and the content students are learning in their classes?
- Have newcomer students made progress in terms of their literacy development? What data showing newcomer student progress has the program collected?

CAL then chose three programs for site visits on the basis of their strong literacy development strategies and assessment procedures. The sites selected indicated that they had collected data to demonstrate student progress. During the site visits, CAL staff gathered detailed information via teacher interviews, classroom observations, examination of resources and documents, and discussions with program administrators and other staff. The data and documents were examined later and compared with other programs. As needed, follow-up phone calls were made to the programs to verify interpretations of the data, ask clarifying questions, or seek additional information.

Research Findings

Intake/Assessment Centers

Large school districts, especially in urban or metropolitan centers, have established intake centers to assess and determine placement of all new students to the school system. (See Glossary in Appendix B for descriptions of assessment instruments.) Because many of these centers are responsible for assessing large numbers of students each year—including newcomers—they have developed procedures for initial assessment and placement, and for ongoing support of newcomer students and their families in terms of orientation to the school system and to the new communities. A number of districts in urban, suburban, and rural locations that serve newcomer students with limited English proficiency also have intake centers to centralize resources and reduce the burden on individual school staff to enroll these students. Because newcomers who do not speak English often require more time to assess, a dedicated process and staff can be a valuable asset to a district.

The types of activities at these intake centers include the following:

- home language survey
- English language assessment, including a writing sample
- other assessments in native language literacy, math, and/or other content areas
- review of transcripts from country of origin (or another district)
- orientation to the rules and practices of the local school district
- placement into a newcomer, ESL, bilingual, or other program
- orientation for the parents
- referrals to health and social services

Once a newcomer student has completed the intake process, the assessment information is given to the newcomer program in which the student will enroll, enabling counselors and teachers to ensure correct academic placement and to provide a starting point for instruction.

Newcomer Database Profiles

Two newcomer programs that are listed in the *Directory of Secondary Newcomer Programs in the United States: Revised 2000* (Short & Boyson, 2000a) and online database (Short & Boyson, 2000b) are intake centers that provide initial assessment and placement as well

as intensive English language instruction for a brief period of time. These two intake centers also familiarize newcomers with the expectations of U.S. schools. Upon completion of this short-term instructional program, the newcomer students make the transition into the regular ESL program in their home schools.

DeKalb County's Intake/International Student Center, Georgia.

DeKalb County's Intake/International Student Center in Chamblee, GA serves all K–12 schools in the district and is the designated site for the registration, testing, and placement of international students who are new to the district. The center assists new immigrant students and their families and places the students in appropriate instructional programs, serving as a liaison between the schools and language minority families. This program is instrumental in reducing culture shock as it aids newcomers in the acquisition of social and language skills necessary for a successful adjustment to life in the United States.

For placement purposes, newcomer students take the Language Assessment Battery (LAB), the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, the Wide Range Achievement Test I or II (for math placement), and a locally designed assessment. Students who score below the 10th percentile on the LAB are enrolled in the International Center and receive intensive English instruction in a full-day program lasting 6 weeks. Parents receive orientation regarding their responsibilities when their children have been assigned to the International Center. Students are also enrolled in their home schools while attending classes at the center, returning to the home school daily for a math class during the last instructional period of the day.

At the center, students of many cultures interact as they receive support in understanding and coping with the norms of U.S. schools (e.g., schedules, rules, bus routes, homework, courses, cafeteria protocol) and of their new country. The center staff explained that the interaction among children from so many countries in this program, including countries that have been in conflict with each other, is extremely positive. The students develop friendships and assist each other with adjustments to school life. Among these students, the level of tolerance and acceptance of others is a model for all people.

Garden City Intake Center, Kansas.

Serving one high school and four middle schools, the Intake Center in Garden City, Kansas, receives newcomer students in Grades 5–12 who arrive in the district after the regular

school year has begun. The program was established in 1996 to respond more effectively to the needs of large numbers of newcomers who were arriving mid-term. Approximately 160 students receive instruction at the intake center each year. To determine placement, the center assesses students' English language proficiency and content area skills by administering the Language Assessment Scales (LAS), the Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test (BVAT), IDEA Proficiency Tests (IPT) for reading, and teacher developed tests for areas such as math.

If students are identified as having little or no English language proficiency, they remain at the Intake Center and receive up to 18 weeks of full-day instruction in small classes of about 10 students. Students may or may not have low literacy skills in their native languages. The language of instruction is English with native language support in Vietnamese and Spanish. In addition to the English language development courses, students take content-based ESL courses in language arts and health in sheltered instruction classrooms. Students also take courses in cross-cultural/orientation to the United States and school study skills. Literacy practices at the center include computer-assisted instruction, primarily the Rosetta Stone materials, and LEA (language experience approach), among others. Instruction is based on school district standards and the *ESL Standards* developed by TESOL (1997).

Students exit into the regular ESL program in the home schools when they reach a level of language and academic proficiency that is adequate for that program. High school students who remain in the program longer than 4 weeks may accrue credit toward graduation in language arts. The Intake Center staff develop rapport with the students' families and refer them to other service agencies, creating a strong parent-teacher support base.

Intake Center Site Visits

International Student Guidance Office, Prince George's County, Maryland.

Location and Staffing

The International Student Guidance Office (ISGO) in Adelphi, Maryland serves as the intake center for newcomer students in Prince George's County Public Schools. Located in a wing of a district administrative building, the ISGO receives approximately 4,800–5,000 international and language minority students¹ who are new to Prince George's County each year.

¹ School districts across the United States use several terms to refer to language minority students. In our study, they may be called ESOL (English speakers of other languages) students, ESL (English as a second language) students, and ELL (English language learner) students.

The ISGO provides intake assessment, placement, and follow-up services to students born outside the United States, students whose primary language is not English, and foreign exchange students. The majority of the students they serve are native Spanish speakers. In addition to student registration and placement, the ISGO provides a number of services to English language learners (ELLs), their families, and the receiving schools, such as social and academic counseling, parent outreach programs, foreign transcript evaluation, and workshops on multicultural topics for school system personnel.

The ISGO staff consists of four certified counselors and two ESOL program testers/diagnosticians, all of whom are bilingual in Spanish and English. Additional ISGO staff members include three newcomer outreach counselors, two ESOL intervention specialists, and an ESOL parent liaison coordinator. The two ESOL testers/diagnosticians are certified ESOL teachers who work in the schools part-time as mentors for new ESOL teachers. Although the outreach counselors and parent liaison coordinator are headquartered at the ISGO, they usually work in schools across the district, rather than at the ISGO offices. The ESOL intervention specialists operate out of offices at two Prince George's County high schools.

Student Assessments

The intake center operates during the school year and summer and focuses on ELLs from preschool through high school. Throughout the school year, parents or guardians of newcomer students make appointments at the ISGO to register their children. Typically, 60–80 students register at the ISGO every week while school is in session. New immigrant families with school-aged children usually find out about the ISGO and its location from neighbors or extended family members. For 4 weeks in the summer, the ISGO is open for walk-in registration. This is the busiest time of the year, so additional staff members are available to assist with intake. To identify preschool ELLs, the ISGO sends counselors several times a year to the large PreK centers in Prince George's County where they assess the students.

Upon arrival at the ISGO, newcomer students and their parents or guardians meet with the intake counselors to discuss the students' educational history, explain the process of registration, and address any concerns the family and students may have. To identify and place students with interrupted formal schooling, the intake counselors review the registration form to determine prior schooling. If no school is listed, or if there are obvious years of schooling

missing, the counselors try to determine through further discussions with the parents how many years, if any, the student has attended school and how regularly.

The two ESOL testers/diagnosticians then conduct the initial assessment, meet with the parents or guardians of the student to discuss the results, and return the family to the counselor for transcript evaluation (if applicable), school placement, and scheduling. Prince George's County uses the IDEA Language Proficiency Test (IPT) for identification and placement of ELLs, as mandated by the state of Maryland. When the ESOL testers give the IPT, they begin with the oral section. If a student scores ESOL Level A, he/she may not continue with the reading and writing portions of the test. The schools use the same assessment twice each year, for initial placement and for the end-of-year progress evaluation.

Placement Procedures

Prince George's County Schools have three ESOL levels, and at the high school level, they also offer a transitional English course for students who have exited the ESOL program. ESOL Levels 1 and 2 are double class periods to provide intensive language instruction. ESOL Level 2 students may also take a content-based ESOL course called Cognitive Academic Based Language Experience (CABLE). Students receive an English credit for one period of ESOL each year at the high school level. Students with double periods of ESOL in high school receive an elective credit for the second period.

At the ISGO, the counselors meet with parents following the IPT assessment to review student transcripts and assign credit if applicable. Their transcript evaluation system draws on the expertise of the metropolitan Washington, DC region. Prince George's County Schools belong to an organization called the Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisors, a group that includes counselors and specialists from regional school districts. Members of this organization meet three times a year to share expertise in foreign transcript evaluation.

All of the information that is collected at the ISGO is entered into the computer system, and a printout that includes test results and the recommended placement in an ESOL level is given to the family. The counselors try to place newcomer students with interrupted schooling no more than one grade below their age level to ensure that students remain in age-appropriate classes with their peers. The intake counselors then identify the school with an ESOL program that is within or closest to the student's attendance area, and send the parents to enroll their

children in classes there. Parents or guardians bring the paperwork from the ISGO to the receiving schools for the school counselors.

Orientation to Schooling

Orientation activities for newcomers in Prince George's County are conducted primarily through the ESOL outreach counselors, the intervention specialists, and the parent liaisons. These three groups work collaboratively to provide a broad network of services and support for newcomers and their families as they adjust to their new schools, classes, and communities. For example, the ISGO provides newcomer families with information about many community resources (e.g., local health care centers, procedures for obtaining insurance) as well as school information (e.g., hours, contact information, names of Spanish-speaking personnel in the school).

The three ESOL outreach counselors serve 14 schools and work on a variety of school-based and district wide projects (e.g., Latino college fair) throughout the school year. Schools or principals can suggest projects for the counselors to develop, depending on the specific needs of the students in conjunction with the priorities of their School Improvement Plan. One example of such an activity took place at a school with a group of eighth grade ESOL students who had been retained in that grade. The outreach counselors began meeting with the students and conducting group activities focused on gang intervention, career exploration, and study skills. Another example involved a school request for group meetings with newcomer boys who were all recent arrivals from Sierra Leone. The outreach counselors set up these meetings and invited male college students from Prince George's Community College, also from Sierra Leone, to attend and provide mentoring activities for the boys.

One major activity of the outreach counselors is the formation and support of school-based newcomer groups. The purpose of these groups is to assist newcomer students in their adjustment to the concerns and difficulties they face in their new country and culture, and to facilitate adjustment to the U.S. educational system. ESOL outreach counselors meet with these groups in each school three or four times each year to provide a support network, group counseling, and training in cross-cultural adaptation. The groups of 8–10 students each remain intact throughout the school year. Each outreach counselor has 14–16 groups at any given time, spread out over several schools in the district. The groups are formed in different ways, by age, proficiency level, or occasionally language group. New groups form throughout the year as

newcomers arrive mid-term. All meetings are held during the regular school day, and the outreach counselors try to rotate meeting times so that students do not consistently miss the same class to attend the meetings.

The group meetings allow the students to share the feelings they experience as they adjust to life in the United States. Some of the problems they discuss are a sense of isolation, a lack of English skills, having few friends and no support systems, and separation from family members who have remained in the native country. The outreach counselors plan activities to help students learn about U.S. culture and expectations of U.S. schools. As the students participate in these activities they learn strategies for coping with culture shock and for identifying adults in their schools to whom they can turn for help and support when needed.

The outreach counselors also conduct various workshops on topics such as 1) how to help families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for college financial aid, 2) strategies and information for new counselors about working with ELLs, 3) how to help ELLs prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and more. They also work extensively with newcomers' parents, providing workshops on discipline, homework help, attendance requirements, graduation requirements, reading skills, and other topics that parents frequently request. At these workshops, bilingual agendas and materials are always provided, and parent liaisons at the school are available to interpret. Attendance at these workshops has been remarkably high.

Another component of orientation for newcomers is the work of two Prince George's County ESOL intervention specialists. These specialists work with ELLs at all levels who are at-risk for dropping out of school—including newcomers—primarily to help them address their problems at home or at school. They have found that students with interrupted formal education, in particular, as well as all newly arrived students face many problems during their first year of school in the United States. The intervention specialists provide home visits, after-school tutoring, social work, and conflict mediation. They also strive to connect students with resources in the community. The issues that they help students deal with may be extreme and are often of a more urgent nature than anything classroom teachers are trained to address. Students come to the intervention specialists on their own or through teacher or parental referral. The specialists take calls on weekends and in the evening, and each has a cell phone "hotline" that students may use at any time.

The work of the intervention specialists varies from day to day and week to week according to students' needs. One intervention specialist sponsored a newcomer group for newly arrived, Spanish-speaking students at her school throughout the year. She was planning to start another group the following year for students newly reunited with their parents after being raised by extended family members in their native country, a situation that is not uncommon among newcomers.

Parental Involvement

The final component of the newcomer orientation activities in Prince George's County is the network of ESOL parent liaisons who work with a parent liaison coordinator at the ISGO. The coordinator is responsible for selecting, training, and supporting school-based parent liaisons. In the 2002-03 school year, 35 parent liaisons work at 29 schools throughout the district. Two worked in high schools, two in middle schools, and 31 in elementary schools. All are bilingual in Spanish and English. It is critically important that each liaison be school-based so that they can bring families directly into the schools and help them become involved.

The parent liaisons are active at the schools, translating, producing newsletters, directing family involvement activities, and more. Each liaison, although hired as a paraprofessional, does not work in any particular classroom, working rather from an office and conducting activities throughout the school. Many liaisons have their desks just inside the entrance so that they are accessible to parents as they enter the school building. The teachers, principals, and families of newcomers and other ELLs rely strongly on these parent liaisons. Newcomer parents know that they can communicate with school personnel through the liaisons, and they feel welcome in the school. The parent liaisons can answer their questions, write notes about student absences, and help with other issues. This service helps to break the barriers between the ESOL students' parents and the schools.

At their schools, the parent liaisons hold classes for parents on a variety of topics such as parenting skills, ESOL courses, and community resources. One example of an activity that a parent liaison set up is the "Second Cup of Coffee" program. Held quarterly, this event brings in community members who tell newcomers' families about the resources available to them, so that they are better able to access these resources. For example, personnel from a local grocery store explained how to receive a discount card for groceries, and a bank manager discussed how to open and use a bank account. The liaisons often call parents personally to tell them about events

or conferences, and parental involvement at school events has soared since the parent liaison program was established.

Summary

The newcomer intake and orientation network in Prince George's County Public Schools is proactive, offering a wide range of support to newcomers and their families. The extent of the follow-up work with newcomer students and their families, including a network of outreach counselors, ESOL teachers, the ISGO staff, intervention specialists, and parent liaisons, is unusual, yet effective. The services offered take into account the ongoing needs of the whole child and his or her family, not just test scores and placement. The ISGO staff are able to provide newcomers with critical support during crises that might otherwise be overlooked. Through this support, newcomers' families are given access to the school environment and the empowerment that is necessary for helping them to become involved in their children's education.

Fairfax County Public Schools' Intake Center, Virginia.

Location and Staffing

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in northern Virginia receives approximately 6,000–6,200 ELLs each year, many of whom are newcomers. The main intake center for newcomers to FCPS is located in Devonshire Center. This facility, in Falls Church, Virginia, is used for meeting with parents and families of ELLs to gather information about the students, explain the enrollment and assessment process, and administer assessments. The hallways are lined with chairs and tables that display bilingual, family-oriented magazines.

When newcomer students and their families arrive at this center, they first meet with bilingual staff members to discuss the procedures of assessment and placement. Parents, in consultation with specialists who review students' transcripts from other countries, discuss possible grade assignment and high school credits. Then, the students move to the other wing of the facility for assessment. The staff at the intake center are multilingual; during the 2002-03 school year, they included speakers of English, Spanish, Korean, French, German, Dutch, and Turkish.

Student Assessments

Prior to administering assessments, assessors at the intake center meet informally with the student and parents so that the student feels comfortable. An assessor then escorts the student

to the testing area and begins initial assessments to determine the student's proficiency in English, native language skills, and content area skills. All staff members who assess students are certified, experienced bilingual teachers with ESOL endorsements.

The first assessment instrument is an oral English proficiency interview developed by FCPS staff that includes questions designed to evaluate a student's basic interpersonal communication skills and level of academic English. This instrument is not presented as a test but rather as an informal conversation, and students are not pressured to answer questions they do not understand. Categories for the questions begin with greetings and courtesies (e.g., "Hello. What's your name?"), then move on to sharing personal information (e.g., "Tell me about yourself. Do you have any brothers or sisters?"), to school/academic information (e.g., "Do you like to read? What language do you usually read in?"), and last to current situation and future plans (e.g., "How is your new house and neighborhood different from where you used to live?"). The assessor records the student's responses for each question. Based on the student's ability to respond, the assessor may or may not complete the entire series of questions.

Following the interview, newcomers take the *FAST (Focus on Achievement Standards in Teaching) Math* assessment at a level that is based on data provided by the parents or guardian. The math instrument is available in more than 35 languages, and students are assessed in both their native language and in English. This assessment, designed by FCPS staff, is aligned with FCPS's *FAST Math* curriculum² that is used throughout the ESOL program and is based on the Virginia math standards. High school newcomers who have studied math in their native countries and demonstrate that they have already mastered the *FAST Math* curriculum may be given a "mini final exam" for the high school math courses that are indicated on their school transcripts. These "mini final exams" are based on actual exams that FCPS high school math teachers use. Students who pass these exams may receive high school math credit for the corresponding class.

Next, students are given a writing assessment. They respond to a writing prompt in English and then again in their native language, if they have had previous schooling in their native country and possess the literacy skills to do so. Students may select from a number of prompts or write about another topic of their choice. Students in Grades K–3, choose one picture from a selection of pictures and write about it. Alternately, the children can draw a picture and then write about what they have drawn. The assessors encourage the students to write whatever

they can, even if it is just their name, a few words, or a simple sentence, in their native language, in English, or both so that the assessors have a sample of the students' writing ability. The writing sample is scored on the same rubric that is used to assess student writing in the regular ESOL program. This rubric is aligned with the FCPS language arts curriculum and Virginia English language arts standards.

Assessors then evaluate the students' reading level. They seek to determine reading readiness in elementary school children as well as how well the students can read. This is done through a beginning reading assessment that measures concepts of print. Using a children's book and a response sheet, assessors ask students questions, such as "Where is the front of the book?" "Where do you begin reading on a page?" "Which direction do you read in?" and "What is this punctuation mark?" Elementary school students are also given an assessment in which they are asked to copy basic shapes, write their name, copy a sentence, and identify letters of the alphabet in English. For newcomers in Grades K–2, the intake center staff then administer the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment). For students in Grades 3–5, they use the QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory). For Grades 6–12, they use the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power). As with the writing and math assessments, these testing instruments are aligned with those used to evaluate students at their receiving schools, in both the ESOL and mainstream programs.

FCPS has designed a "debriefing office" at the Devonshire Center for Fall 2003. There, staff can meet with families in a quiet, private environment to discuss the student's performance on the entry assessment and the instructional plan for the school year.

Placement Procedures

The staff at FCPS emphasize accurate, appropriate newcomer student placement, and they believe that such placement is critical to student success. The intake center also tries to provide as much information as possible to the receiving schools in which the students will enroll, so that the teachers can tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. Following the assessment procedure, assessors complete an ESOL student assessment form that indicates all of the assessment results and the recommended placement in the newcomer or ESOL program. Typically, newcomer students who arrive with limited, interrupted, or no previous schooling are placed in the ESOL LA level (Literacy Level A), or the ESOL A level, which serves beginning level students of various educational backgrounds. Schools may have sub-levels within the

² This resource and other instructional materials are listed under Classroom Resources on p. 73 of this report.

ESOL LA and ESOL A levels (e.g., A1, A2, or a combined LA/A class), depending on the size of the school's program, the population, and available resources. If newcomers are 18 years or older, they may be referred to one of the district's transitional high school newcomer centers that enroll adult students up to any age, if they meet the entry criteria. The student assessment forms are placed in each student's file, which is immediately sent to the receiving school for the ESOL teacher to review and use for instructional purposes.

Orientation to Schooling

The intake center staff at Devonshire Center have developed the *Handbook for Parents of ESOL Students*, which is distributed to parents when they arrive to enroll their child in school. This handbook is translated into the 10 most commonly spoken languages in FCPS. It includes information about ESOL student placement, school schedules, transportation, the free/reduced price lunch program, books, dress codes, grades, and parent-teacher conferences. In addition, the handbook provides information about the level of parent participation that is typically expected in U.S. schools, how to inquire about health insurance, and how to enroll in adult ESOL classes in FCPS. The intake center also provides parents with a two-page letter in 10 languages that covers specific information required by the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

In August 2003, the FCPS intake center began to pilot a family resource program at one of their assessment sites, employing two liaisons. One is a World English speaker and the other is a Spanish speaker. While the children are being assessed, the liaisons present the parents with information about county social and health resources (e.g., health clinic, employment, housing).

Program Strengths

Aspects of the FCPS intake center that seem to be particularly effective include the following:

- The center is welcoming to parents, families, and students. The facility is comfortable and easily navigable, and the staff speak many languages. Forms that families fill out are available in the 10 most commonly spoken languages in the district. The ESOL teachers who conduct the assessments are sensitive to the special needs of newcomer students. They use strategies to make the process non-threatening such as encouraging the students and giving them stickers as rewards.

- The intake facility carefully preserves student records and places great importance on providing accurate, thorough information to receiving schools. Since 1994, the intake center has kept records for Kindergarten students on the Pre-Language Assessment Survey (Pre-LAS) so that they can track the progress of these students over time. Assessment scores are kept for 3 years for all students who are in the ESOL program to examine student progress and ensure that students move through the ESOL levels with appropriate intervention if they are not making adequate progress.
- The intake center uses the same commercial tests that receiving schools use for evaluating student progress and achievement throughout the school year. This alignment is highly valued.
- Importance is placed on the reliability of assessment results and on helping students meet the same standards as their mainstream peers. For example, two teachers assess Kindergarten students using a language proficiency rubric (speaking, reading, and writing) and the Pre-LAS; then they reach consensus regarding the appropriate placement for the students. Kindergarten students need a score of 85 on the Pre-LAS to be placed in mainstream classes. The rubric includes performance benchmarks for mainstream Kindergarten students to ensure that the goals the teachers have set for ELLs are realistic (i.e., not expecting them to perform above grade level, yet holding them to the same high standards as all other students.)

Summary

The FCPS intake center provides a comprehensive range of assessments for newcomers, including evaluation of their English language proficiency, native language literacy, and content area skills. Through these assessments, schools and teachers who receive newcomer students throughout the year are provided with detailed information that can be integrated into instruction. The competent, bilingual staff and streamlined procedures offer a model for other intake centers. The FCPS center also involves students' families, and provides them with translated materials and information on how to access resources in their new community.

Newcomer Reception Centre, Greenwood School, Toronto, Canada.

As a result of the *First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students*, CAL staff learned about the secondary newcomer program at Greenwood School in Toronto, Canada, the only one in the province of Ontario and the only one identified in Canada at this time. The director of this program attended the newcomer conference and invited CAL staff to learn how the Canadian program operates. The program is designed to serve approximately 245 students, ages 13–18, although in the spring of 2003, enrollment was at 260, and most of the students were 15 or older. The students speak 35 languages including Turkish, Pakistani, Greek, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Tamil. A site visit to the program revealed a very interesting approach to the intake and placement process of newcomer students.

Location and Staffing

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) operates two Reception Centres for high school-aged newcomers to the district. The one serving students who enroll in the east end of the city is located in the same building as the Greenwood School. Because the east end of the city is a common site for immigrants to first settle, many of the students who partake of the centre services are newcomers. The TDSB hires multilingual, certified teachers for the reception centre staff and prefers teachers with ESL teaching experience. The Greenwood centre has three full-time staff members; two staff serve as language assessment specialists and one as a math specialist.

Assessment Philosophy

The reception centres have a developmental, child-centered philosophy. The staff are very interested in determining an accurate assessment of the newcomer students' knowledge and abilities. Consequently, in many cases, the intake assessment process lasts for a full school day. (In the past the process could last for 3 days, but due to budget limitations, the time has been shortened.) The staff explained that many students arrive feeling anxious or scared. They may have experienced trauma before entering Canada. It may have been several months or even years since they last studied in a classroom. Most are not proficient in English. So, recognizing the inherent difficulty of assessing the students' knowledge accurately through the language in which students are not proficient, the staff sought ways to decrease anxiety. The new students are given time to look through textbooks—even overnight—to review their knowledge before

being assessed. The staff also spend time informally interviewing the students. They have found that this process leads to a better initial placement, reducing the need to move students after the first week or two and allowing them to settle in and perform to their full capabilities from the start.

Student Assessments

The assessments at the Reception Centre include an interview, an oral language assessment, a reading exam, and a writing sample. The first assessment is an interview with the student in English or the student's native language, if possible. Parents may participate in the interview as well and assist centre staff in completing a Newcomer Profile. General student information is sought: name, gender, age, home language, other languages spoken, date of arrival in Canada, and so forth. Information about the student's educational background is recorded, including an explanation of the student's prior school attendance, whether irregular or disrupted. The staff also seek individualized information about the student, such as his/her favorite and difficult school subjects, hobbies and interests, work experience, and goals after high school. These profiles also include information about the student's family background and medical history.

To measure a newcomer student's English language skills, the staff offer district-developed assessments to measure oral language, reading, and writing proficiencies. The results of the assessments are recorded on the Language Assessment Form. The goal is to select an appropriate placement for the student among three categories of instructional service: English as a second language (ESL), English language development (ELD) (for orally proficient or World English speakers who lack literacy skills), or the regular program in English. There are five levels of ESL and four levels of ELD.

The oral language assessment is an interview that mostly asks questions requiring basic communication skills, not academic skills. Staff determine, for instance, if a student can respond to common questions, maintain a conversation on a familiar topic, communicate fluently with grammatical accuracy, or speak with native-like competency. They decide which ESL level the student's oral skills match or if the student should be designated an English speaker. They also record on the Language Assessment Form the student's prior English language experiences and language of instruction at school in the past.

The reading assessment covers a range of skills such as identifying letters in the Roman alphabet, following written instructions, making inferences from a passage, and explaining literary elements. Staff check the student's use of a bilingual dictionary and notice if the student has studied some English or other literature before. Staff decide which reading level (i.e., an ESL level, an ELD level, or regular English) the student matches and record the information on the Language Assessment Form.

A student is then asked to respond to a prompt and provide a writing sample. The centre offers several guided writing options and planning sheets (for pre-writing preparation) according to the ability of the students. They include the following:

- a cloze passage that students complete and then copy
- a picture of a city scene that students look at and then write about
- a personal narrative with a prompt to stimulate reflection
- a persuasive writing piece.

For the last option, the student may refer to a sheet of persuasive writing signal words to help them recall terms such as “in my opinion,” “furthermore,” and “on the contrary.” The writing topics are not particularly academic although the persuasive writing option represents an academic skill. The staff assess the writing sample for the student's communicative ability (e.g., writing legibly, paragraph-level discourse, appropriate vocabulary for topic and grade level) and use of conventions (e.g., simple grammar, compound or complex sentences, appropriate punctuation). If the student cannot write in English, he or she may write in the native language (L1). If possible, the staff will read the L1 sample to gauge the student's native language literacy skills. If no one on staff at Greenwood school can read the sample, staff look for clues to literacy such as handwriting, punctuation, or sentence/paragraph formation (if appropriate to the L1 style). As with reading, staff decide which writing level the student matches—an ESL level, an ELD level, or regular English—and record it.

The math assessments are carefully calibrated to grade levels and course types. Ten different assessments are offered to cover the range of math topics from Grades 1–11. Specifically, they assess the following: Grades 1–3, Grades 4–6, Grades 7–8, Grade 9 applied, Grade 9 academic, Grade 10 applied, Grade 10 academic, Grade 11 U (university), and Grade 11 U/C (university/college). At the high school level, a student may be placed into an academic or

applied track depending on his or her postsecondary goals. The academic track is for a student aiming for college or university. The Grade 11 assessment reflects pre-college/university math.

The staff estimate a student's math abilities based on the interview and transcript review to select the first math assessment for the student to complete. Depending on how well the student performs, the staff may give him or her a second math assessment, or more, to determine math knowledge as accurately as possible.

Placement Procedures

A student's performance is reported on several forms. The language assessment teacher makes a recommendation as to language placement based on the results of the oral, reading, and writing measures. This recommendation is written and explained on the Language Assessment Form. Staff record the student's result on the Math Assessment Form that corresponds to the highest level of assessment the completed. This form indicates the extent of the student's performance, such as adding two-digit numbers, dividing fractions, or finding the circumference of a circle.

The staff review the Newcomer Profile, Language Assessment Form, and Math Assessment Form for each student. They also review the student's transcripts, if provided, to determine what courses and grade levels the student has studied and how he or she has performed. A detailed report is written about the student and sent to the receiving school.

Newcomer students with ESL proficiency Levels 1 or 2 may be referred to Greenwood School where they may remain for a maximum of three semesters and may earn up to 12 credits. If students with Level 2 proficiency or less in oral English also have limited academic achievement and literacy skills, are between 11–16 years old, and have resided in Ontario for 3 years or less, they may be placed in the Literacy Enrichment Academic Program (LEAP). LEAP is housed at Greenwood School and is an accelerated model to develop the students' oral English, literacy, and numeracy skills. Students may remain in LEAP for up to 3 years. Students with more advanced English skills (Level 3 or above) may be placed in their home school and receive ESL and/or ELD services or enter the mainstream program.

Summary

Greenwood School's Reception Centre is unique among the intake centers studied with respect to the amount of time spent assessing students. The staff and the Toronto district value

being as accurate as possible in the assessment and placement of newcomer students. To ensure this, they link assessment to instruction in meaningful ways. Having multilingual staff, like the FCPS center does, helps ensure that students are comfortable and parents can be involved both in providing educational background information about their children and in making decisions about program options. By sharing the same site location as the newcomer school, newcomer students and their families experience a streamlined enrollment process.

Newcomer Program Literacy and Assessment Practices

The most recent questionnaires—sent in 2001–2002 and 2002–2003—for newcomer programs to update information for the database included specific questions on literacy practices and assessment procedures that programs use (see Appendix A). From 26 responses, it is possible to gain some understanding of the practices that newcomer programs in the United States currently find to be effective.

Newcomer Program Survey Results

Literacy Development Practices

The questions related to literacy development asked programs to identify instructional strategies, staffing designs, and materials that they have found useful in helping newcomer students develop reading skills. While the 26 programs use a wide range of strategies and materials, there were some common practices throughout their responses. For example, the language experience approach (LEA) is regularly used across programs as an instructional strategy, as are the teaching of phonemic awareness and initial phonics, direct reading instruction, read-alouds, vocabulary study, cooperative learning, computer-assisted language learning, adapted versions of adolescent novels, and native language literacy development.

Programs stressed the importance of selecting literacy strategies that meet individual student needs and tailoring instruction accordingly. Students who arrive with little or no native language literacy have very different needs from those who have had the benefit of schooling in their native country, and the literacy strategies employed by the program must be sensitive to these differences. Several programs also indicated that they have developed literacy programs for parents of newcomer students, or that their student literacy programs include a parent involvement component.

A number of programs reported that their staffing strategies included the services of tutors (including bilingual tutors), community volunteers, paraprofessionals, and peer tutors. Additionally, several programs noted that they make a concerted effort to hire teachers with a strong background in reading instruction—often teachers with elementary teaching experience—and that they draw on school- and district-level reading experts for professional development and coaching for their newcomer program teachers.

No single curricular program or type of material emerged as the one most frequently used by newcomer programs. Some secondary school newcomer programs indicated that they use

high-interest/low-readability materials from various publishers to build student interest and to ensure that the books the students read are appropriate for their age level. Native language materials are also used in some programs, as are teacher-made materials. Several surveys indicated that their programs also emphasize reading in the content areas.

Student Assessment Practices

The survey questions related to newcomer program assessment practices asked the programs to identify specific assessment instruments and indicate how they are used to determine student placement, measure student progress, and ascertain program exit. As with the literacy strategies, a wide range of assessment practices and instruments were identified by the 26 programs that completed this section of the survey. Typically, programs use the same test or battery of tests for placement, progress, and exit, so that they can compare scores as the students advance through the program.

Most programs utilize standardized assessments to some degree. Some of the more common assessments are the Language Assessment Scales (LAS), Language Assessment Battery (LAB), the IDEA Language Proficiency Tests (IPT), Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey, The Maculaitis Assessment of Competencies II (MAC II), Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE), Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Aprenda, and several state tests such as the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Assessment instruments used by the various intake centers and newcomer programs profiled in this report are described in the glossary in Appendix B.

Additionally, many programs indicated that they use multiple measures. Along with standardized tests, they use site-developed, teacher-developed, or district-developed instruments for placement, progress, and program exit. Programs also utilize alternative assessment measures such as portfolios, writing samples, observation checklists, running records, anecdotal records, and rubrics. Such instruments are used to help programs gain a broader picture of how well newcomers are achieving in school, rather than relying on a single test score.

Several programs stressed the importance of aligning assessments for newcomers with local school district standards or benchmarks, and of ensuring that assessment be an ongoing process that is integrated into all classes. Often programs align their assessments with the ESL Standards developed by TESOL (1997).

Newcomer Program Site Visits

The programs that were chosen for site visits represent widely different models, although similarities exist across them. One model is the Newcomers High School in Queens, New York, established in 1995 to provide a supportive environment for new immigrant students in Grades 9–12 and their families. Another model, the Newcomer Centers in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District in Texas were established in the late 1990s as programs within specific schools that serve large ELL populations. Each center serves more than one district school. Students in this program may or may not be on grade level academically. A third model in the Lincoln Public Schools in Nebraska was established more recently, in 2000, to improve instruction for newcomer students in Grades 4–12 who arrived with no formal schooling or with interrupted formal education in addition to a lack of English language skills. The design for this program was centered in extensive and ongoing professional development for the teachers of these students.

Newcomers High School, Queens, New York.

Program Description

Newcomers High School (NHS) in Queens, New York, is a full-day, separate site program for new immigrant students in Grades 9–12. Enrollment at NHS grew from 743 students in 1996–97 to 1,200 students in 2002–03. The NHS program is nationally recognized as an innovative newcomer program and the staff frequently host visitors who have requested assistance in the establishment of a newcomer program or the improvement of an existing one.

The emphasis at NHS is the development of English language proficiency and native language skills. Students attend classes 25 hours per week, 9 of which are English courses. The remaining 16 hours are content area courses delivered through sheltered instruction, an integrated approach to learning language through the content areas. With students from over 40 countries, NHS provides Spanish, Bengali, and Mandarin bilingual classes, as well as Bengali and Polish native language arts. The goal of the program is that students will be able to attain academic, cultural, and athletic excellence as a result of their studies. The school staff work with students individually to identify their abilities, strengths, needs, and interests. The students are then directed to programs within NHS and/or in other NYC schools that can meet their needs and interests.

A primary focus at NHS is on best instructional practices, with a strong emphasis on reflective teaching. The administrators and teachers in this school place a high value on testing out new approaches to ascertain which practices will best match their students' needs. This newcomer program also attaches great importance to integrating technology into the classroom, using not only computers but also the school's media production lab, in which students have prepared programs for local television Channel 57. At the media lab, students also present news programs at the school, summarizing the national, international, and school news. Each year, a new cohort of six or seven teachers takes professional development training to learn how to use NHS technological resources effectively in class.

Newcomer Students

Students are admitted to NHS only if they have never attended a U.S. school and have limited English proficiency. They represent 40 countries and speak 29 languages—the top five being Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, French Creole, and Punjabi. Those who enroll in the NHS program in Grades 9 and 10 transfer to other New York City high schools with appropriate programs after 1 year. To help smooth this transition, the students attend a high school fair that provides them with information about the numerous options available in NYC. Throughout the city, high school students attend the school of their choice if they are accepted. If students are not accepted in the school of their choice, they attend the school in their zone. Students who enroll in the NHS program in Grades 11 and 12 may remain at NHS to graduate and may choose an NHS program design with linkage to a university, vocational, and/or work-study program.

Staffing and Professional Development

NHS employs nearly 90 staff members, 66% of whom are proficient in at least one of the students' native languages. NHS teachers are certified in their areas of instruction, creating a strong academic program for English language learners. Much of the professional development is aimed at new teachers, stressing the importance of nurturing them so that they will stay in the profession. For new teacher orientation, the assistant principal utilizes seminar materials created by the NHS principal for the mentoring process. The assistant principal also organizes workshops presented by NHS instructors and by outside consultants via partnerships with other schools and organizations. Staff development workshops explore interdisciplinary approaches and a variety of teaching strategies, including the use of more ESL methodology in content area

classes and the use of technology to explain difficult concepts and to motivate students. Teachers at NHS are willing to attend these professional development sessions, even when they are not obligated to do so by their teaching contract. After-school workshops on using technology in the classroom are well attended by program staff.

Curriculum

A continuous process of curriculum renewal and reflection occurs at NHS. Special committees meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the curriculum as it relates to meeting the state academic standards and preparing students for the New York State Regents Exams. Discussions on the integration of technology into the curriculum are frequent. Another priority is to address the students' use of inquiry and critical thinking, particularly in science. Committees meet regularly to decide on themes and activities in the content areas as well as to review and evaluate textbooks. Parents are invited to assist in determining priorities for the academic well being of the student body.

Literacy Strategies

The use of visuals is essential for English language learners. At NHS, pictures, charts, graphs, overhead projectors, computer simulations, lab experiments, video, and role-playing skits are used extensively in both ESL and content area courses. The educational program emphasizes intensive English acquisition, and from the beginning levels, students are equipped with basic skills in the four language areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as well as critical thinking skills. Because writing skills are critical to success in the content areas in high school and college, the ESL instructors devote special attention to developing these skills, allowing time for journal writing, responding to literature, peer editing, and writing and editing several drafts of essays.

Together, staff and students identify needs for subject-specific bilingual instructional materials; and in their courses, the students create products to meet those needs. For example, in one class, the students created and shared bilingual Memory Books in print and online. These books review many of the students' perspectives and experiences as newcomers to the United States, and other students and staff members have found them useful in the ongoing acculturation process at NHS.

Classroom Practices

The entire NHS program is designed to ensure that neither the stresses of adapting to a new country and culture, nor the lack of English language proficiency, prevent students from learning challenging content at high levels of achievement. The use of ESL methodology in all content area classes ensures that students achieve high levels of competence. Teachers design engaging lessons with meaningful tasks that require interaction in English to accomplish them.

In their courses, students create projects of high quality that include Power Point presentations, videos, oral histories, charts, glossaries, and much more. At every grade level, Regents-level classes are offered, including earth science, living environment (biology), chemistry, and physics. Working on bilingual projects, the students share data and insights into U.S. immigration history and current immigration laws, the U.S. market economy, the roles of the police and courts, and the workings and importance of the electoral process, for example, which follow the academic standards set for every NYC high school. NHS has also offered college-level English and statistics classes for students who have reached high levels of achievement.

Student Assessment

In terms of assessment practices, NHS favors an eclectic approach that considers students' progress in terms of their strengths rather than their weaknesses. Teachers use an array of performance-based assessments, and while the students must pass standardized tests such as the New York State Regents Exams in order to graduate, such assessments are only one piece in the ongoing process of determining how well students are progressing in the program. NHS students must meet the same standards as U.S.-born students. They are required to pass all state Regents Exams (English, math, global history, American history, and foreign language).

Initially, at orientation, NHS staff assess students in English and mathematics. Students are placed in appropriate math classes on the basis of their test scores on teacher-developed math assessments and a review of their transcripts. The students are placed into ESL levels according to their Language Assessment Battery (LAB) scores. During the first 2 weeks of school, after the initial placement, teachers assess the students in the classrooms to determine whether or not they have been placed appropriately. If not, the students may be moved into the appropriate level as their level of language proficiency becomes more apparent. When students score at the 41st percentile on the LAB, they take English language arts classes rather than ESL.

Teacher-developed exams and quizzes, student portfolios, oral reports, demonstrations, class specific rubrics, cooperative learning activities, group projects, New York native language writing assessments, and reading tests in Chinese and Spanish are used in various ways to determine student progress and achievement in language and content. Advanced Placement (AP) exams are also given to students who are interested in taking AP elective courses for college credits. The school leadership team and the NHS administration examine the results of these assessments to determine school and department goals, to develop themes for staff development workshops, and to determine the critical thinking and study skills that should be developed schoolwide in an interdisciplinary manner.

Data on Student Progress

One great concern of the school is how to measure student achievement with comparable students across NYC and the United States. All students at NHS are English language learners, but as the staff have compared the NHS students with other students citywide, including native-English speakers, the NHS students' performance compares quite favorably with the performance of the general student population. In an interview, the NHS principal revealed, for example, that while ELLs who entered NYC schools in high school showed extremely high dropout rates and low graduation rates, the graduation rates at Newcomers have been 80–90%.

According to the principal, another indicator of academic success at NHS is shown by the AP test results. All but one of the 21 students (95%) who took the AP Spanish Language exam in 2002 scored 5 (highest possible score); the other student scored 4. In the same year, about half (48%) of the 21 students who took the AP Spanish Literature exam scored 5, and 52% of them scored 4. Eighty-three percent of the students who took the AP Calculus exam in 2002 scored 3 or above, and 75% scored 4 or 5 on this exam. These assessment data indicate that many of the NHS students are reaching high levels of achievement and are not only prepared to graduate from high school but also to succeed at the college level.

Summary

Although all students at NHS are English language learners, they are achieving the same goals as their native English-speaking peers at other NY high schools. Students in this high school are presented with a broad range of course options that include not only sheltered newcomer courses but also Regents courses, technology courses, and

courses in the students' native languages. Neither the lack of English language skills, nor the diversity of the student body has prevented these students from reaching high levels of achievement. In interviews, the NHS staff expressed certainty that their ongoing professional development, curriculum refinement, and individualized instruction with high standards for student achievement contribute much to the overall strength of the program, making NHS an excellent high school for newcomer students in NYC.

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District, Texas.

Program Description

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District is a large suburban district near Dallas, Texas that serves over 25,000 students, approximately 5,500 of whom are classified as LEP. Because this district receives large numbers of new English language learners each year—many of whom arrive knowing little or no English and having experienced interruptions in their formal education—Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District developed a newcomer program to serve this student population more effectively. This program-within-a-school model is located in two elementary schools, five middle schools, and two high schools and prepares newcomers to enter the district's regular ESL program. In the elementary schools, the newcomer classes are self-contained while at the secondary level, students receive at least one 90-minute block of newcomer instruction each day.

There is also a large summer school newcomer program for students who arrive in the school district in January or later in the school year. For newcomers in Grades PreK–8, the summer school program is called “Learning the Language.” Its thematically designed curriculum includes many hands-on activities that give the students opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in English. For high school newcomer students, a separate summer school program focuses on familiarizing them with U.S. school culture and expectations and on building basic literacy and math skills. The school district also provides summer school ESL classes for newcomers who enrolled in school prior to January but have been in U.S. schools less than 1 year. In addition, Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District sponsors ESL classes for parents of ELLs and a new transitional program for newcomers who are 17 years of age or older when they arrive.

Newcomer Students

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District is remarkably diverse. Since 1981, the population of ELLs in the district has risen from 144 to over 5,500, an increase from 1% of the total student population to over 21%. Students in the newcomer, ESL, and bilingual programs represent 46 native languages and come from 54 native countries. The majority of the students (77.6%) are native Spanish speakers. The next largest groups are native Korean speakers (4.5%), native Urdu speakers (3.6%), and native Vietnamese speakers (3.3 %). Students who arrive in Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District and are identified as LEP have several program options including bilingual education, ESL, and the newcomer program. Their program enrollment depends on their needs and the choice of their parents. The district defines a “newcomer” student as one who has minimal listening comprehension in English, no verbal production in English (NES level on the IPT), no reading ability in English, and has lived in the United States for less than 12 months.

Staffing and Professional Development

The teachers in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch newcomer program are certified in ESL. The district offers over 250 hours of ESL-related staff development each year, and the newcomer teachers regularly attend professional development workshops and seminars in order to learn about best practices for teaching newcomer students. They also hold monthly meetings at their schools to discuss student progress, share effective instructional strategies, and evaluate curricular materials.

Newcomer teachers also attend professional development workshops related to teaching in the content areas so that they have an understanding of a broad range of curricula and instructional methods. For example, all newcomer, ESL, and bilingual program teachers attend training in how to implement a balanced literacy approach in the classroom so that they are prepared to teach beginning literacy skills. In the past, such training was reserved for mainstream elementary school teachers; now, it has been extended to teachers of ELLs at all levels.

A strong emphasis is placed on integrating technology in the classrooms in this district. The middle school and high school newcomer centers use the English Language Learning and Instruction System (ELLIS) program, Scholastic’s Read 180 software, and the LightSpan Achieve Now program extensively in their programs, and teachers receive training in how these programs work, as well as how to infuse them into their daily instruction. Elementary newcomer

teachers and some middle school teachers use ELLISKids, the elementary version of ELLIS, and receive similar training.

Newcomer program teachers also collaborate on school-level initiatives relating to curriculum and instruction. At Turner High School, for example, two high school teachers collaborated one afternoon each week throughout the summer to align the course objectives of the English for Non-English Speakers newcomer class with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the statewide standards for all students. The alignment and recommendations they developed were shared with colleagues during preservice days in the fall of 2003. Teachers frequently work on such projects in order to ensure that students in their newcomer program are challenged to meet the same high standards as other students in the school.

Curriculum

The Carrollton-Farmers Branch newcomer program takes an eclectic approach to curriculum design. Because no group of newcomers is exactly alike, teachers draw from a wide variety of materials and curricula in order to meet the needs of each class. There is, however, strong consistency in terms of the academic achievement that is expected of students. Academic goals and lesson objectives for newcomer classes are based on the district's grade-level standards for all students, which are aligned with the TEKS. Teachers and administrators in the program emphasize that they hold newcomers to the same high standards as all students. While providing a safe, nurturing environment for newcomers that helps them adjust to U.S. schools and build literacy, this newcomer program also ensures that newcomers are provided with challenging, grade-level content concepts through curricular alignment with the mainstream courses.

Literacy Strategies

Many strategies are utilized in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch newcomer program to meet the students' developmental, social, and academic needs, including the development of literacy in English. The school district's ESL/Bilingual Education Department administers the newcomer programs, and carefully tracks student data in order to determine which programmatic and instructional strategies work best for teaching literacy to newcomer students.

Teachers in this district are active in districtwide initiatives to learn about best practices for teaching literacy. One document that resulted from such an initiative is the resource book,

Best Practices for Literacy Instruction: Grades PreKindergarten through 12 (1998). Developed by a collaborative team of ESL teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and district administrative staff, this document describes successful research-based practices for teaching literacy at each grade level and gives examples of indicators that measure whether these practices are being used in the classroom. Examples of best practices are reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, interactive writing, shared writing, and building and extending oral language. This document is used for professional development throughout the district.

Newcomer classrooms are equipped with computers, and technology is heavily integrated into literacy instruction. The teachers use ELLISKids, ELLIS, Read 180, and LightSpan Achieve Now software in a variety of ways. The teachers report that the software programs have greatly helped newcomer students develop literacy, as the programs provide extensive practice in phonics, reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary development. Secondary school teachers have indicated that many newcomer students are able to increase their reading level through the combination of technology and instruction, often moving from little or no literacy in English to a second grade reading level or above in 1 year. The newcomer teachers also find technology-based programs to be a good springboard for instruction, allowing them to design lessons based on some of the passages and activities that are included in the programs.

Classroom Practices

The site visit to Carrollton-Farmers Branch that was conducted for this pilot study included classroom observations at Carrollton Elementary School's "Learning the Language" summer school newcomer program and at two high school newcomer centers, Turner High School and Creekview High School, as well as interviews with district staff and with teachers in each of these three school sites. This section describes some of the classroom practices that are being implemented at these newcomer centers.

During classroom observations at the "Learning the Language" summer program at Carrollton Elementary School, students in Grades PreK–3 were seated in circles in the gymnasium with their teachers. A former district ESL/bilingual program director, John Godbey, was leading them in a sing-along. The curriculum, which Mr. Godbey and a team of Reading Recovery teachers developed, is thematically based and integrates literacy skills with children's stories. Mr. Godbey, dressed in a colorful hat and jester costume, played his guitar and led the students in a musical rendition of "Little Miss Muffet" that they pantomimed along with their

teachers. Before singing the song a second time, he asked student volunteers to come up on the stage, where the backdrop for a puppet show had been set up, and act out what was happening in the song. Next, the group sang “Where is Thumbkin?” acting out the lyrics to the song as their teachers demonstrated the gestures.

Following the sing-along time, the PreK–3 students returned to their classrooms where they were involved in age-appropriate, literacy-building activities centered around the stories they had sung. The morning sing-along is a daily ritual for newcomers in Grades PreK–3 and students in the program are given a CD with the sing-along music on it to listen to at home and share with their families.

Students in Grades 4–8 engage in literacy activities focused on the same stories as the younger students who they join every Friday morning to sing and act out the lyrics together. The older students read the stories in illustrated storybooks created for this program by Mr. Godbey. The stories include “The Three Little Pigs,” “Gingerbread Boy,” and “The Three Billy Goats’ Gruff,” among others, and are used as a basis for teaching phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies. The “Learning the Language” curriculum includes direct instruction in phonics, using words from the story as a basis for teaching the letters, sounds, and blends. For vocabulary development, colorful word walls and lists with definitions and illustrations are used as visual aids in the classroom. The students sometimes participate in choral readings, paired readings, and also group projects. Follow-up activities, such as creating summary cartoons, are based on the stories. Students participate in literature circles to discuss a story they have read.

The high school level literacy strategies differ from those in the elementary program, but are similarly focused on building literacy skills through a balanced, thematic approach. Newcomer students at Turner High School receive one 90-minute block of English literacy every day. Students initially take a course called English for Non-English Speakers (ENES). This class is offered throughout the school year and also during the summer to newcomers who arrived in January or later. The ENES classes utilize ELLIS software and base many of their literacy strategies on this program. One newcomer teacher at Turner organizes her classes of 15–17 students so that they are divided into three groups during most of the ENES block. While one group works with the teacher on pre-reading, reading fluency, and other activities related to the stories they are reading on ELLIS, another group is at a computer station using the ELLIS

program. The third group is engaged in cooperative tasks, which vary from day to day, but may include shared reading or having a focused discussion following independent reading.

During the school year, students who have moved out of ENES take an ESL reading course that utilizes Read 180 software. Read 180 is similar to ELLIS, but it allows students to advance to higher reading levels and also makes use of video clips to present the context of a story. Voice recognition software that students can use to practice reading aloud includes leveled readers for topic areas (e.g., sports, disasters, law) similar to the stories they read on the computer. Using this kind of technology allows the teachers the flexibility to work with small groups on pre-reading activities and task-based projects, and still provide ample time for students to engage in independent reading for comprehension and fluency.

The newcomer program at Creekview High School also relies on ELLIS and Read 180 software. As at Turner, the teachers at Creekview utilize a variety of strategies to build literacy and fluency, such as jazz chants, choral reading, guided reading, books on tape, and cooperative learning. In addition, program teachers have developed specific curricula for newcomers who are enrolled in courses required for graduation, such as Speech.

One newcomer program teacher at Creekview devised a curriculum that follows the mainstream speech curriculum while building students' background knowledge and ensuring that the content of the course is comprehensible for them. The curriculum begins with a project in which students explore their own backgrounds and native cultures, including small group discussions and vocabulary-building activities related to their experiences. Students create a collection of pictures representing their cultures, then prepare and deliver a formal presentation about these pictures to the class. The students then discuss and write about their journeys to America (e.g., how they arrived, traumas they experienced, loss of family and friends) and prepare and present a Power Point slide show about how they came to the United States. The final part of the curriculum is a unit on students' futures, during which they research potential careers and prepare a speech about their futures to present to the class. Through this curriculum, newcomer students learn the same content standards as students in the regular speech classes, but in a way that makes the content comprehensible and meaningful to them and also provides opportunities for language development through reading, discussion, writing, and vocabulary-building activities.

Student Assessment

When a newcomer student arrives in the district, he or she enrolls at the home school, where the parent or guardian fills out a Home Language Survey. From this survey, the counselors or other staff who are in charge of enrollment procedures determine whether a language other than English is spoken in the student's home. If so, the student is given the Oral IDEA Language Proficiency Test (IPT) in English. This testing must be completed within 4 weeks of the student's enrollment. If a student scores Non-English Speaker (NES) on the IPT and has been in the United States less than 12 months, he or she qualifies for the newcomer program and is placed there. If teachers notice significant student progress at any point during the year, they may call a meeting of the school-based Language Placement Assessment Committee to consider possible changes to the student's placement.

All newcomers who enroll in school during the second semester of the school year are given the Oral IPT again in May in order to determine whether or not they should be placed in the newcomer program the following year. Elementary school newcomers who score NES on the IPT in May and also have a Texas Primary Reading Index (TPRI) score below a specified level (Level 8 for Grade 1, Level 14 for Grade 2, Level 16 for Grade 3, Level 20 for Grade 4, and Level 34 for Grade 5) will remain in the newcomer program the following school year. Middle and high school newcomers who enroll during the second semester and score NES on the IPT in May are automatically enrolled in ENES the following year. As noted, all newcomers who enroll in January or later may attend the summer school program.

A student may exit the newcomer program and make the transition to an ESL or bilingual program any time during the school year, if ready. A student who enrolls in the newcomer program in the fall usually remains throughout the year. If, however, the student scores Limited English Speaker (LES) on the IPT in December and, for an elementary newcomer, his or her PRI score is above the specified level, the Language Placement Assessment Committee will meet to review the student's placement and he or she may return to the home school and enroll in the regular ESL program in January. Teachers or parents may call a Language Placement Assessment Committee meeting at any time to review student progress and determine whether the student should exit from the newcomer program into regular ESL classes.

Data on Student Progress

The newcomer program in Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District—and the larger ESL/bilingual program as a whole—places high importance on maintaining accurate student data, and on ensuring that students are assessed regularly in order to determine placement, track progress, and assist students in making the transition to the next level when they are ready. The district ESL/bilingual office has databases that include entry and exit information, student demographics, and test scores. The director reviews this information, and data are updated each year so that the department is able to track a student's progress over time. One reason for tracking student progress is to lower the dropout rate. For example, students who have been enrolled in ESL for more than 4 years are identified because they are considered to be potential dropouts. ESL/bilingual staff inform the department in charge of dropout intervention so students may receive assistance. This process of identification and intervention lowered the ELL dropout rate to 0.5% in 2002.

Some ELLs are also integrated into the district's gifted/talented program. Teachers may identify potentially gifted/talented students and recommend testing using the Aprenda for Spanish speakers. Currently, 53 of the students in the district's gifted/talented program are ELLs; an additional 230 students are former ELLs. The ESL/Bilingual Education Department's philosophy is that all students should be challenged to meet the highest levels of achievement that they possibly can, including ELLs who are gifted/talented.

Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District has gathered data that indicate student progress, including both test scores and teacher-reported data.

- 1) Classroom-based assessments indicate that newcomer students are achieving high levels of literacy. ELLIS and ELLISKids software is designed to track students' scores in reading and indicates grade-level gains they have made. High school newcomer teachers reported that almost all of their newcomer students are able to read on at least a second grade level by the time they leave the ENES newcomer classes, even those who were below Kindergarten reading levels in English reading when they first arrived. Furthermore, newcomer students continue to increase their reading level when they move on to Read 180 and other courses during their second year in the program. As would be expected, for students with interrupted formal education, the process may take longer; however, even this group of students made

- progress over the course of 1 year in the program, and many of them increased by at least one or two grade levels during that time.
- 2) Students are advancing in English language proficiency as they progress through the program. This is shown by Reading Proficiency Test of English (RPTE) scores, which measure levels of English language acquisition. This is administered to all ELLs yearly, and categorizes them as Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced. These test data were used to determine who would take the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) in 2002, and are now used to determine who takes the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) since 2003. ELLs who score in the Beginning or Intermediate levels on the RPTE and have been in U.S. schools for less than 3 years do not take the TAKS (nor did they take the TAAS). ELLs who score in the Advanced level do take the TAKS (and previously the TAAS). Of all the ELLs in Carrollton-Farmers Branch school district who took the RPTE in 2002, the majority of students in all grades except for Grade 9 scored in the Advanced category, indicating that they had made enough progress in their English language development to take the standardized tests. In all grade levels except for Grade 5 and Grade 12, the second largest category was students who scored Intermediate. The high levels of achievement on the RPTE and the number of students who score in the top two levels indicate that a large number of ELLs are attaining English language proficiency through the specialized programs provided by Carrollton-Farmers Branch schools.
 - 3) Students are progressing through the program and are achieving grade-level standards academically. This is shown by statistics on ESL program exits each year. During the 1997–1998 school year, 16.1% of all ELLs in Grades 2–12 exited from the ESL program. In 1998–1999, this percentage rose to 21.3%, in 1999–2000, it rose to 28.8%, and by 2001–2002 it had reached 31.6%. Exit criteria in the state of Texas through 2002 included passing the grade-level TAAS exam in English, so the above percentages also indicate the percentage of students who passed the TAAS. This steady increase in percentage rate demonstrates that the newcomer and regular ESL programs are exiting more students each year and helping them to reach the academic standards of mainstream students.
 - 4) The number of students who “met minimum expectations” on the TAAS is also high. At least 50% of the ELLs in Grades 3–8 who took the TAAS in 2002 (e.g., those who

scored an Advanced level on the RPTE) met minimum expectations on the reading, math, and writing components; for a number of grade levels and subject areas, the percentage was much higher. For example, of all fourth grader ELLs who took the TAAS in 2002, 90% met minimum expectations in reading and for ESL third graders who were tested, 84% met minimum expectations in math. These statistics indicate that the majority of ELLs served by Carrollton-Farmers Branch ESL/bilingual programs were able to achieve grade-level academic standards.

- 5) On the 2002–2003 TAKS, students in Carrollton-Farmers Branch who were classified as limited English proficient, including students who had been served by the newcomer, bilingual, and ESL programs, scored significantly higher than their counterparts statewide. For example, while 65% of the ELLs in Texas scored in the “met minimum expectations” range on the Grade 4 reading TAKS, 73% of the ELLs in Carrollton Farmers Branch attained a score in this range; 61% of the Grade 6 ELLs met this benchmark on the Math TAKS in Carrollton Farmers Branch compared to 49% statewide; 73% of the Grade 8 ELLs scored “met minimum expectations” on the social studies TAKS, compared to 68% statewide. For the majority of TAKS assessments across all grades and subject areas, ELLs in Carrollton-Farmers Branch fared better than all ELLs across the state of Texas, indicating that the programs serving them, including the newcomer program, are helping them to achieve success on these types of assessments at a higher rate when compared to their ELL peers in Texas.

These data demonstrate that ELLs in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch school system are reaching high standards, including increased literacy skills and academic achievement, as measured by standardized tests and classroom-based assessments. The programs for ELLs that exist in the district are clearly effective in terms of helping students achieve. Most of these data, however, do not distinguish between students who were served by the newcomer program and those who were not. Rather, these scores reflect the achievement of ELLs served by all language support programs in the district, including the newcomer, ESL, and bilingual programs. Because the newcomer program is an integral part of the overall services provided to ELLs in this district, and because the newcomer program served many of the students in ESL or bilingual classes at one time, it follows that the newcomer program is likely to be a contributing factor to the overall success of ELLs in this district. The district has not analyzed the assessment data to determine

the progress of newcomer program students separately from that of students in the ESL and bilingual programs who were not in the newcomer program, but would like to do so in the future.

Summary

The newcomer program in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch school district strives to implement effective, research-based strategies to help ELLs develop high levels of literacy and succeed academically, and this has had an impact on student achievement. Through thematically based curricula such as those developed for the “Learning the Language” summer program and the speech course, the alignment of newcomer course goals and objectives with grade-level standards, the integration of technology in literacy instruction, and other instructional initiatives, the Carrollton-Farmers Branch program provides a rich experience for newcomers that focuses on high expectations and academic success.

The RESULT Program, Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska.

Background

One of the greatest challenges to teaching secondary newcomer students who have never been to school or who have interrupted formal education in their native language is providing instruction that is appropriate for both their age and educational background. When these students have the opportunity to develop literacy in the language they already speak, they may gain these skills very rapidly. However, when resources are not available to develop the students’ native language literacy skills, they may begin to learn literacy for the first time as they are learning English language skills. This creates an even greater challenge for both students and teachers.

Although primary grade teachers enroll in preservice education courses that train them in beginning literacy instruction, ESL and mainstream teachers in fourth grade and beyond generally do not receive this training and are consequently unprepared to deliver beginning literacy instruction to older students. Yet, it is crucial to the success of students with limited formal schooling (LFS) that their teachers have a thorough understanding of how to teach beginning literacy skills.

In the late 1990s, the Lincoln Public School system faced challenges related to the arrival of an increasing number of LFS students in the district. The regular classroom teachers in Grades 4-12 who taught newcomer students realized that they had not received the required training to

teach literacy at the appropriate instructional level for these students. Because the ESL teachers were also unprepared to offer assistance in beginning literacy, the regular classroom teachers were not receiving the same degree of support that they had formerly received for newcomer English language learners (ELLs) who were literate in their native languages and at grade level academically. The teachers, wishing to increase their capacity to help all students reach the high district standards, sought to identify how best to provide these newcomers with the accelerated learning in both language and literacy required for their success in school.

In response to the critical need for well-trained teachers and school personnel in the Lincoln Public Schools to work with these students, the RESULT (Reaching English Success Using Literacy and Technology) professional development program was created. RESULT offered elementary, middle, and high school teachers and other staff the much-needed training in beginning literacy instruction in English. Those who wished to receive this training volunteered to participate in the program.

Program Description

The RESULT Program was a 3-year, federally funded “Training for All Teachers” grant that began in the summer of 2000. This program provided staff with the training, study time, technology, and materials required to learn engaging, research-based teaching strategies that would lead to systematic instruction in beginning literacy in English. The goal of the project was to improve the achievement of ELLs in general, especially those who were below grade level, yet some of these strategies apply for all beginning ELLs.

During the first 2 years of the project, a steering committee representing the district elementary and secondary language arts, special education, math, technology, ELL, and media departments met monthly with the project coordinator to provide ongoing direction for the project. The program staff researched the best reading and writing practices used with young children and applied them to older ELLs, adapting strategies and materials to match their interest, age, experience, and cognitive development. Ongoing teacher education throughout the 3 years of the project, including a 3-week institute each summer, was the heart of the program. By the third year, staff in eight district elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools had participated in the RESULT program.

Newcomer Students

The student population in Lincoln Public Schools represents 53 nations and represents 42 languages. During the 2002–2003 school year, 1,657 ELLs comprised 5.4% of the student population. Over several years, the number of students with limited or no formal schooling who were arriving in the Lincoln Public Schools from the Middle East (Arabic and Kurdish speakers) had increased, and the challenge of meeting their needs adequately had a direct impact on the community and school system. Each year, approximately 125 of the English language learners entering the Lincoln Public Schools were LFS students and perhaps seeking an education for the first time. These LFS students were placed in Literacy classes and ELL Level 1 classes that are part of the newcomer program for Grades 4–12.

Staffing and Professional Development

In 2000, a cadre of 16 teacher leaders was chosen from among those who had volunteered to participate in the RESULT program. Of these 16 teachers, 13 continued in this position throughout the 3 years of the project. The cadre was comprised of one media specialist, one technology specialist, two elementary reading teachers, two math teachers (one middle and one high school), and seven ELL teachers (three elementary, three middle, and one high school). Two middle school reading teachers and one high school reading teacher participated for 1–2 years.

The RESULT project coordinator, a reading specialist with background in beginning literacy, together with the support of district staff and University of Nebraska consultants, initiated the professional development for the 16 teacher leaders in the summer of 2000. Together, they discussed best practices for beginning literacy in English, math, and technology and how these practices might be adapted for ELLs not literate in their native language. In the 2000 summer institute and in her Literacy classroom throughout the 2000–01 school year, the RESULT coordinator modeled literacy lessons for the teacher leaders, who could observe her classes during their lesson preparation time. Teachers in the cadre of 16 who had ELL or reading backgrounds became the Literacy class teachers.

During Year 1, the 16 teacher leaders applied the strategies they would need to teach and model when coaching the new cohorts of teachers in the summer of 2001, 2002, and 2003. The teacher leaders were given opportunities to observe one another, either in the classroom or by watching videotaped lessons that were delivered in Literacy or ELL Level 1 classes. The teachers discussed the classes they observed and collaborated in planning lessons for LFS

students. The observation and feedback sessions were considered key to the success of this program.

The focus of the 3-week summer institutes was teacher practicum and growth, but both teachers and students benefited from these sessions. The institutes combined additional instruction (i.e., summer school) for the lowest-performing LFS students with training opportunities for teachers who wanted to learn how to instruct LFS students or how to improve their instruction for them. During the summer institutes after 2000, the original cadre of teacher leaders became turnkey trainers, modeling lessons for additional cohorts of approximately 30 teachers each. Over the course of the program, the number of teachers (ESL and content areas combined) who were trained in beginning literacy practices totaled over 100.

In the summer sessions, the teachers videotaped their classes and used the videotaped lessons as a springboard for their small group discussions. Each day, the teachers spent 2 hours with the students and 2 hours in their own meetings to discuss the day's instruction. After completing the RESULT training, many teachers formed their own study groups across schools by content or grade level in order to reach more teachers, thus expanding the use of the strategies they had learned.

Teacher collaboration has been an important aspect of the RESULT program. During each school year, the RESULT coordinator provided 2-hour workshops bi-weekly for the original cadre of 16 teacher leaders and each new cohort of about 30 teachers. Teams of teachers worked together during the summer institutes and during the school year to design and fine-tune instruction for the LFS students. The media specialist, a member of the original cadre provided guidance in the selection of appropriate materials for the library, with a purchase of over 1,200 books. The RESULT teachers considered the library and media connection an important strength of the program. Together the teachers explored and prepared appropriate materials, designed rubrics, and worked with the district curriculum coordinator to improve the overall curriculum for English language learners in Grades K–12.

With LFS students dispersed throughout the district's schools and classrooms, including mainstream classrooms, the long-term goal of the program during the school year was to involve as many teachers as possible in strategies for teaching ELL and LFS students effectively, thus making these students' education the responsibility of all school staff. In addition to the literacy training, RESULT staff invited nationally recognized consultants to provide over 300 district content and ELL teachers at all levels with professional development workshops in sheltered

instruction. This teaching approach for English language learners integrates the learning of language into content area lessons to accelerate the students' academic progress while they learn the language.

Teachers in the RESULT program have also learned to apply appropriate family involvement strategies to enhance the parents' skills as educators of their children. For instance, all communication to parents is translated into four languages: Arabic, Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese. In this and other ways, multilingual staff liaisons in the district provide communication to families about enrollment, transportation, and breakfast and lunch programs. In their classes, students make books that they can take home and share with parents and siblings. Family literacy in the home is valued and encouraged in this program.

Curriculum

Aligning objectives and assessments with other district programs has been a high priority for the RESULT program teachers, particularly in connection with curriculum implementation in the reading and math departments at both the elementary and secondary levels. The RESULT teachers also worked with other ELL staff to ensure that the curriculum was aligned with rigorous district and state standards for reading and writing. For LFS instruction, the literacy teachers matched the leveled reading books that they use in the Literacy classes as closely as possible with the grade-level content area topics. Teamwork between the teachers was essential for this planning to take place. The teachers of LFS students were allotted 45 minutes of collaborative planning time weekly during the school year for instructing these students.

In the Lincoln Public Schools, curriculum development is ongoing, with input from content teachers as well as ELL teachers for a content-based ELL curriculum. In an interview, the district curriculum coordinator stated that the RESULT program had provided a broader scope across the ELL curriculum than had previously been in place for the implementation of content-based ELL instruction. One outcome of the RESULT program has been the improved sequencing of the curriculum for all ELLs in Grades K–12, including LFS students in Grades 4–12.

Literacy Strategies

In professional development training, the teachers in this program have been instructed in the best practices for the Balanced Reading curriculum that is used with native English speakers

in Grades K–3. The teachers have adapted these practices to the grade level of the ELLs in their K–12 classrooms using a thematic approach with topics related to the mainstream curriculum. Teachers in the program have become knowledgeable about the specific literacy skills to target: alphabet knowledge, vocabulary development, reading fluency, phonics, and phonemic awareness.

To develop vocabulary, RESULT teachers choose words from the readings, develop word walls, and surround the students with print they can understand and refer to often. The teachers also use flash cards and student work sheets. For phonics instruction and phonemic awareness, some of the teachers use *Systematic Sequential Phonics They Use: For Beginning Readers of All Ages*, a method that is appropriate for older learners. Other program teachers use *Fast Track Phonics for Young Adults*, and the paraprofessionals use the *Sondy System*, a more scripted type of phonics instruction, for their small group work. Literacy practices such as read alouds, shared reading, interactive writing, modeled writing, shared writing, and writer's workshop are employed in the classroom.

Guided reading is an important aspect of this program. Teachers have learned to apply instructional reading strategies from the guided reading practices delineated in books, such as *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom* (Fountas & Pinnell, 1998). When choosing themes collaboratively, the teachers find or may even write poems and short readings that can be read together as a whole group. Books are selected to support the chosen themes at the appropriate reading level for groups of three to six students.

Teachers in this program use the *National Geographic Windows on Literacy* series comprised of leveled readers that discuss topics related to the content areas. These readers are especially useful for secondary school students who are developing beginning literacy. They include photo illustrations that are age-appropriate for older students, yet the texts are at their instructional reading levels. Other leveled readers that are used in the RESULT program for this purpose are the *Reading Power* series and a content-based ESL series, *Scott Foresman ESL: Accelerated English language learning*, the ESL Sunshine Edition. The *Little Red Readers* and *Leap Pad* books are also used in some of the classrooms.

Some RESULT teachers print leveled reading books (Grades K–5) from the Web site, www.readinga-z.com, and distribute them according to the students' independent reading levels. Where resources are expensive and funds limited, a Web site such as this offers inexpensive materials that the students can keep and take home to read to family members, thus promoting

family literacy. Students may color or write in the books, giving them ownership of the materials.

To develop writing skills, the teachers often use shared writing. With teacher support, students may develop a text together using the language experience approach (LEA) to writing, or they may write independently in journals that the teacher responds to individually. The RESULT teachers use graphic organizers to help students brainstorm vocabulary that may be needed to develop a text. One activity that teachers use to build the students' vocabulary employs manipulatives. The teacher provides each student with a set of letters printed individually on small cards that the students can rearrange to form words. After presenting the key vocabulary for a lesson, the teacher may give the students clues to discover a 'secret' word hidden in the combination of letters they are working with that day. Students seem to enjoy these kinds of word games that help them to develop literacy skills.

In the RESULT institutes, the teachers learned how to use technology to be creative in their instruction of LFS students. Most of the classrooms have computers and many of the students learn keyboarding skills. Program teachers have taught the students how to use software such as Power Point to write stories and make presentations. The students may use digital cameras to insert pictures or they may add sound into their presentations. They also print the Power Point presentations to make books that they can share at home or with friends. Teachers have received instruction in the use of other types of technology for literacy instruction. For example, students are recorded reading their own texts, which helps them to develop reading fluency.

Classroom Practices

The site visit to this program included visits to three literacy classrooms (two middle school and one high school) and one ELL Level 1 classroom (high school), in which some LFS students were enrolled. Teachers in the Literacy classrooms are provided with paraprofessional assistance and parent volunteers assist in some of the rooms. In one school, literacy and ELL teachers team-teach during some class periods, providing small group instruction.

During the school year, LFS students receive 3 hours of ELL Level 1 instruction daily in classes where they are placed with other ELL Level 1 students who may be on grade level academically. The LFS students receive 1 or 2 additional hours of literacy instruction in the middle school and high school. In an interview, RESULT staff pointed out that for these

students, 2 full hours of literacy support per day with the same instructor seems to provide the most effective use of time for accelerating their learning. To complete the day, LFS students take math and physical education in mainstream classrooms.

Class size is kept small with around 10–15 students per class so that instruction may be individualized as much as possible. Students may be divided into smaller groups of 3–6 for cooperative learning activities or to address the needs of multiple levels within the classroom. While the teacher works with one group of students at their level, a paraprofessional may work with another group of students at a different level, and a third group may work semi-independently at a higher level. Often the instructors of the small groups rotate so that all of the students may benefit from small-group instruction with the literacy teacher as well as with the paraprofessional, thereby optimizing instruction for all.

Teachers use strategies for sheltered instruction to engage students in meaningful activities as they learn language and content. The teachers also provide instruction on learning strategies that students can use to accelerate their learning. Posters displayed on the classroom walls remind students how to use these strategies to take responsibility for their own learning. The classrooms are print-rich with many visuals displayed around the room to facilitate the students' literacy development.

When interviewed, the teachers commented that they now have a greater number of appropriate materials for the Literacy classes than when the program began in 2000 and they had to create many of their own. The search for appropriate materials for older learners of beginning literacy has led teachers to select materials mostly in the non-fiction genre. Knowing that students need to access other genres as well, the search for appropriate materials is ongoing. The program is currently piloting two series for English language learners, the *High Point ESL Series* and *The Basics Bookshelf Series*.

Student Assessment

When new immigrant students arrive in the district, initial assessments take place at the Lincoln Public Schools district offices. Parents accompany the students and are involved in the decision-making process regarding the students' educational plan. There are 6 ELL levels in the regular program with an entry level of 0 for some students. Assessments used for intake purposes are the Pre-LAS or LAS-Oral if the English language proficiency is very low, or the LAS-Reading, Writing, and Math subtests if English language proficiency is higher. The IDEA

Proficiency Test (IPT) for speaking and listening may also be used. A district-developed, picture vocabulary test and math assessment are administered, and a writing sample is requested and scored using the Lincoln Public Schools' Holistic Writing Rubric for ELL Placement and Movement. A native-language writing sample may also be requested. Students are interviewed with their parents upon entry, and parents are given an orientation to the school system, as well.

In the planning stages, RESULT staff determined that the ELLs who would be targeted for the RESULT program would be those with limited or no formal schooling at the emergent/early reading level as determined by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). District-developed assessments for Grades K–3 based primarily on research from Reading Recovery are administered to assess students' reading progress. In the classrooms, teachers have learned how to take running records to determine students' individual reading levels (i.e., independent, instructional, or frustration) for specific texts, and they develop their instructional plans based on their student observations.

When students reach the second grade reading level, they exit from the Literacy classes. Students usually remain in the Literacy classes for only 1 year while enrolled in ELL Level 1 classes. Many LFS students exit both the literacy and ELL Level 1 classes after 1 year; however, others may require 1½ to 2 years in ELL Level 1 before they enter ELL Level 2. Students must score at the third grade reading level on the Stanford Reading Exam to enter mainstream classes in middle school and high school, although some secondary schools require a fifth grade reading level for admittance to the mainstream classes.

Data on Student Progress

In addition to their school enrollment during the regular school year, some LFS students have enrolled in the RESULT summer institutes. The LFS student data collected districtwide in the 3-week summer institutes in 2001 and in 2002 were used to demonstrate LFS student progress. Student enrollment in the 2001 summer institute was determined as follows. At the end of the 2000–01 school year, the district schools were asked to identify students in Grades 4–12 with the lowest ELL and literacy levels. Students who were reading at the first grade level or below and who had initially scored NES (Non-English Speaker) or LES (Limited English Speaker) on the IPT and Entry level on the Lincoln Public Schools' writing rubric were invited to enroll in the RESULT Summer Institute for instruction and data collection.

In June 2001, 105 students registered for the institute and of these, 85 attended regularly. The students' baseline reading scores were determined with a DRA Pre-test at the beginning of the 2001 Institute and again with a DRA Post-test after the 3-week (15-day) session. The DRA assessments showed that the students made some progress within the kindergarten and first grade DRA levels during the 15 days, but these scores were intended only as baseline data and not to demonstrate growth.

In June 2002, another Summer Institute was held, in which 37 of the lowest performing students who had also enrolled in June 2001 returned and were assessed on the DRA at the end of the 2002 institute to determine how much progress they had made in 1 year. When their DRA post-test scores for June 2001 were compared with their DRA post-test scores for June 2002, an average of 2 years' growth in reading was demonstrated, 1.5 levels of growth in writing (district writing rubric), and 1 level of movement in language proficiency as seen on the LAS. These scores revealed important gains for the LFS students in the RESULT classrooms and demonstrated that the instruction they received throughout the year, in spite of language differences and educational gaps, was helping them to make adequate progress and in some cases more than adequate progress in their literacy and English language development.

Summary

Based on the fact that research is very limited on best practices for teaching English language learners who also have limited formal schooling, the RESULT program staff formulated their first major hypothesis: A balanced literacy curriculum that has been supported by research for instruction in reading and writing with young, native English-speaking students could, with adaptation, also work with older, non-native English-speaking students that have limited or no formal schooling. Consequently, the RESULT program employed a modified version of the Balanced Reading and Writing Model used by the Lincoln Public Schools in primary education for native English-speaking students. After completing Year 2 of the RESULT program and examining the scores of students in the summer institute, the staff concluded that strategies used in elementary schools can work with adolescent learners of all ages and ability levels with appropriate modifications, thus supporting their hypothesis. However, they felt that the DRA should be examined to establish if any possible culture or age bias is evident when used with older ELLs. They suggested that more appropriate reading passages could be used.

The RESULT-trained teachers expressed in interviews that they felt the RESULT program had been a plus for them as well as for the students. The summer institutes were especially beneficial in their view. Being together in one place for the 3-week sessions seemed to give the LFS students a special sense of belonging to a group and the confidence that they could continue to experience success in school.

The RESULT program offers a unique perspective among the sites visited for this pilot research study in that its focus was on the professional development of the newcomer teachers. While the other programs discussed in this report also offered staff development from time to time, RESULT utilized the Training for ALL Teachers grant strategically to help teachers meet the literacy needs of the LFS students whose population was increasing rapidly in Lincoln Public Schools. The sustained professional development offered the teachers of the Literacy classes in particular an opportunity for deep understanding of the literacy development process and for modeling and coaching to support their implementation of effective literacy strategies. The capacity-building aspect of the design ensured that many more teachers than the original 16 developed important instructional skills in literacy for working not just with LFS students but also with all ELLs in the district.

Additional Newcomer Program Data

Information gleaned during the CAL/CREDE study of secondary newcomer programs (1996–2000) suggested that student progress is not always easy to demonstrate due to the short-term nature of student enrollment in these programs, which usually lasts only 1 year. Many programs find that commercially available, standardized assessment instruments are inadequate for the newcomer population, particularly for those with no literacy skills in English. Moreover, unless the students have Spanish literacy and can take La Prueba, Aprenda, or SABE, there are almost no tests that measure academic skills or content knowledge if the test taker does not know English well enough to read test questions and directions. Although some assessments such as the IPT may be used for initial student placement, newcomer programs tend to rely more heavily on teacher-developed tests, student portfolios, and classroom observations to monitor student achievement and progress.

It is difficult to follow newcomer students' progress for several reasons. One reason is the transient nature of immigrants who are new arrivals to the United States. If families move to a new location before the end of the school year or after 1 year in a district, programs are unable to

monitor students' progress. Also, when newcomers make the transition to other programs, or schools in a district, it may be impossible to follow their progress because most student accountability systems no longer identify students as newcomers in their databases after they exit from the program.

Nonetheless, some programs in the study have kept records of their students' standardized test scores and have shared these scores with CAL staff when responding to survey questionnaires or during CAL's visits to school sites. The following data report a number of different test scores that indicate student progress in a variety of ways, depending on the students' background and educational level. It is impossible to compare across programs, however, because each program's battery of assessments is unique. There is no single test that all the programs use.

César Chávez Multicultural Academic Center, Chicago, Illinois.

One newcomer program that demonstrated impressive student progress is the Spanish/English bilingual newcomer program established in 1996 at César Chávez Multicultural Academic Center in Chicago. This middle school program was a case study site for the CAL/CREDE study and serves Grades 5–8. When students enter this program, they take a diagnostic math test, Key Math A or Key Math B, for placement. This test is given in English, but the word problems are interpreted in Spanish for the students as they take the test. The Woodcock Language Survey in English and in Spanish is given for placement in reading. In 1996, when the program was initiated, many students scored 2 years or more below grade level for their age on these entrance exams.

For promotion from one grade to the next, newcomer students are required to master 75% of the skills for each of their courses. Each course has a different number of skills, and the skills change according to level, for example, Level 3 math has 125 skills. The students must also meet district requirements regarding grade point averages and absences. In addition, the students must demonstrate 1 year's growth in English reading and writing as measured by the Woodcock Language Survey. The IMAGE (Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English) is a rubric that is used to assess the writing skills of ELLs in the school, including newcomers.

La Prueba is a standardized assessment instrument that is used for both newcomers and other Spanish-speaking students in Illinois. The César Chávez newcomer students' reading growth from 1996–97 to 1997–98 as demonstrated by *La Prueba* scores is shown in the following

table. On average, the students in each grade made more than 2 years' growth. The eighth grade students reached the highest average with more than 5 years' growth.

Table 1: Average Student Growth on *La Prueba – Reading*, 1997–98

Level	Years of growth in reading Spring 1997 to Spring 1998	Students at or above grade level 1998
Grade 5	2.8 years	43%
Grade 6	2.4 years	42%
Grade 7	4.1 years	60%
Grade 8	5.5 years	60%

Students in Grades 5–8, N= 24

Only newcomer students assessed in both 1996–97 and 1997–98 were included in this data.

On the mathematics section of *La Prueba*, the results for 27 students in Grades 6–8 who took that portion of the test in both 1996–1997 and 1997–1998 revealed an average growth of 3.6 years for the combined grades.

Table 2 below shows the results for 45 students in Grades 5–8 who took the mathematics section of *La Prueba* in 1998. Many of the students scored above grade level although most of them were below grade level upon entry to the program. Fifty percent of the fifth grade students who took the test in 1998 scored at or above grade level with the median grade being 7.1. Forty-three percent of the sixth grade students were at or above grade level with a median grade level of 6.3. Sixty percent of the seventh graders were at or above grade level with a median grade level of 8.4, and sixty-four percent of the eighth graders were at or above grade level with a median grade level of 9.6.

Table 2: Median Grade Levels for *La Prueba* – Math Scores, 1998

Level	Median grade level	Students at or above grade level
Grade 5	7.1	50%
Grade 6	6.3	43%
Grade 7	8.4	60%
Grade 8	9.6	64%

Students in Grades 5–8, N= 45

All newcomer students assessed in these grades in 1998 are included in this data.

The student growth shown in the above data emphasizes the strength of providing students with instruction in their native language, when possible, as well as in English when they are below grade level upon entering U.S. schools. César Chávez newcomer students were taught mathematics in Spanish and reading in English and Spanish through ESL and Spanish language arts classes.

Elementary School Newcomer Center, White Plains, New York.

The Newcomer Center in White Plains, NY was designed for elementary students in Grades 1–6. It was established in 1999 as the result of an action taken by a committee of stakeholders who contended that the newcomers’ instructional needs were not being met in the mainstream classes or by the pull-out ESOL model prevalent at the time. In that model, much of the instructional time was not designed to meet the unique needs of new immigrant students. After researching the possibilities of serving these students under a design that would accelerate the students’ learning, the school launched the newcomer program.

Students who enter the full-day, separate site Newcomer Center program are age-appropriate for Grades 1–6 and have been in the United States for less than 1 year. They also score 10 or less on the Language Assessment Battery. Other assessments that are used for initial placement and screening are the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey to assess native language speaking, reading, and writing skills and the Brigance Diagnostic to assess computation skills in mathematics. Student work and informal district-developed assessments are used to determine their progress in language and content. Also Marie Clay’s (1997a, 1997b, 2000a, 2000b)

informal assessment tools for letter and word recognition and the DRA are used to measure progress in reading.

A balanced literacy approach that employs a variety of guided reading collections is used for Grades 1–4. This approach includes teacher-directed skills instruction in reading along with the activities and strategies most often associated with literature-based, integrated language arts instruction. It is a comprehension program that balances oral and written language practice, including process writing, with an organized, explicit skills program that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills to address the needs of the emergent reader. Ongoing diagnosis and assessment inform teaching and ensure program accountability. Early intervention provides individual tutoring for students at risk of reading failure.

Reading and writing in the content areas is the literacy approach used in Grades 5–6, with theme-related non-fiction for guided reading practice. Small group literacy instruction is emphasized for all newcomers in Grades 1–6, and students whose assessment scores show them to be below grade level are placed in enriched programming options that include extended day, Saturday classes, and extended year programming.

The typical stay for students in this program is 6 months (two trimesters) for Grades 1–5 and one semester for students in Grade 6. Enrollment is open with many students entering mid-term or mid-year. In 2001–02, the total enrollment was 96 but it had grown to 120 in 2002–03. Upon exit from the Newcomer Center, students are placed in homeroom classes with mainstream teachers who have participated in professional development designed to prepare them to work successfully with English language learners. These teachers work collaboratively with ESOL specialists.

Table 3 below shows the progress of 58 students who qualified for the pre- and post-administrations of the LAB in 2001–02. Although 96 students enrolled that year, only the 58 who arrived before April 1 were qualified for both assessments. Ninety-five percent of the students made adequate yearly progress (AYP). Of that group, 87% made two times the norm for AYP, and 75% made 3 times the AYP norm in developing English language proficiency. These data attest to the value of the newcomer program's design and instructional practices.

Table 3: Progress of Newcomers as measured by the LAB in 2001-02

Adequate Yearly Progress	Percentage of Students
Unsatisfactory	5 (n=3)
Satisfactory	95 (n=55)
Satisfactory (2x or more above norm)	87 (n=47)
Satisfactory (3x or more above norm)	75 (n=41)

N=58

Since the initiation of the White Plains Newcomer Center, mainstream teachers in the receiving schools have been very pleased with the accelerated progress of the newcomer students and believe that it is a powerful model that enhances students' learning. Fewer than 10% of the students in this program remain for a full school year.

CONCLUSION

We have learned useful information about the status of newcomer programs in the United States through the conference and pilot research study. The new information builds on and reinforces the data gathered during the earlier CAL/CREDE study and offers recommendations for program practices and future research in this area. These recommendations are important, given the educational reforms taking place as a result of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation and the challenges schools face to ensure that newcomer students meet high academic standards, perform well on state tests, and develop requisite literacy skills for success in school and beyond.

Newcomer Conference

The First National Conference for Educators of Newcomer Students provided an exceptional venue for programs around the United States to meet and exchange practical advice about serving this student population. Teachers, administrators, and researchers discussed important topics for these students, such as adolescent literacy, content area instruction, curriculum design, and assessment. Moreover, school districts interested in beginning a newcomer program gained insights into policy and design decisions they would have to make and learned strategies for implementing a successful program.

The overwhelming response to registration for the conference confirmed the importance of this forum. For many years, newcomer programs have acted in isolation and had few opportunities for professional development targeted specifically to the subset of language minority students that they serve. On the conference evaluation forms, attendees provided very positive comments with regard to the topics, the types of sessions, and the quality of the presentations. OELA's support of this conference was highly praised in the evaluations and requests for a second, longer conference were made and continue to be heard. The conference proceedings offer useful information that can spread the knowledge imparted at the conference to a broader audience.

Intake Centers

The site visits to several intake centers revealed common features that can be recommended to other districts seeking effective initial assessment and placement practices for their newcomer students. First, the intake centers offer centralized assessment and placement of all language minority students. This approach allows districts to consolidate resources and train

personnel specifically for these types of tasks. Further, the districts have hired qualified, bilingual intake center staff who may be social workers or former ESL/bilingual teachers. The main goals of the intake centers are to acquire an understanding of the students' academic backgrounds and measure their English language proficiency, literacy skills, and content knowledge—often in mathematics only. Another important goal is to help the families make connections with social, health, and adult education services available in the community.

The intake center staff take a significant amount of time to get to know the students and assess their academic knowledge. They do not give the students a 5-minute picture test, for example, and send them off to a new school. These intake centers use multiple measures and examine oral language, reading, writing, and mathematics skills. Where possible, assessments are given in the students' native languages to gather more detailed information about their educational backgrounds. Center staff also review student transcripts from other schools and countries. These initial assessments, interviews, and transcript reviews are designed to ensure an accurate placement of the students in their new school district.

Literacy Practices

Our research has revealed that newcomer programs are quite unique. Their designs vary widely (Short & Boyson, 2000a) and they enroll a diverse range of students from those who lack English skills but have had grade-level education in their native countries to those who have no literacy skills in any language and are well below grade-level. Some programs have students who all speak the same language; other programs have over 40 language groups represented among the student body. Each newcomer program therefore must tailor its literacy and assessment practices to the students' language and educational backgrounds. While not every program has the capacity to offer native language literacy classes, those who are able to do so indicated that the development of first language literacy was critical to the students' success in school.

Given the diversity within the student body, the programs use a variety of approaches to literacy development, often trying different combinations of strategies to find an approach that can be effective with their students. None of the programs studied relied solely on one or two strategies; all utilized multiple methods. Some had a combination of strategies for students with native language literacy skills and a different combination for nonliterate students. A single method or strategy is unlikely to reach all students and build on their varied learning styles and

strengths. However, a number of strategies may be modified for use with all types of students. For example, the language experience approach (LEA) may be used for students with limited formal schooling as well as with students who are on track academically but lack English language skills. Decisions such as what content to use for the LEA activity, who writes the sentences, how the sentences are read aloud, and whether the sentences are edited would depend on the group of students for whom the activity is designed.

Several guidelines for newcomer literacy development emerged from this study. One is to use age-appropriate materials for reading and writing and look for high interest/low literacy level reading texts in addition to helping the students learn how to access textbooks. Another guideline is to contextualize the instructional tasks in the students' experiences and background knowledge. These students are not blank slates. The older students in particular have many life skills that teachers can draw upon to develop literacy. A third key point is to move beyond phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. While those components of literacy are important for newcomer students, they are not sufficient. These students also need to develop vocabulary knowledge and acquisition skills (i.e., strategies to enhance their vocabulary knowledge on their own), fluency, and comprehension skills. Finally, the use of technology to enhance literacy acquisition looks promising. All of the sites visited used several computer and multimedia packages to individualize literacy instruction for students as well as help them develop important school skills.

Professional development is another area for attention. Middle and high school educators traditionally have not received training in early reading instruction or literacy development, yet they often have students in their newcomer classes who are learning to read for the first time. Therefore, a gap exists between the newcomer students' needs and teachers' expertise. Programs that have successfully developed strategies for providing these teachers with extensive training in literacy development should be identified, examined, and emulated by others. Such professional development may also help districts meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* for qualified teachers of newcomer students.

Assessment Practices

Our research revealed that effective newcomer programs utilized a variety of assessment measures. Recognizing the difficulty that non-English speaking students who lack literacy in any language have when taking a written test in English, teachers employ a selection of measures in

class, particularly ones that can demonstrate progress over time. For nonliterate students, teachers initially seek assessments that are less language dependent and more performance-based. Alternatives to multiple-choice tests and essays include portfolios, checklists, physical manipulation of objects, and role play. As students begin to gain some proficiency in English, the teachers introduce more written exams. They also begin to teach study skills and provide test-taking practice. Some of the software programs used in class can record a student's performance on an computer-based activity and track progress over time. Because the newcomer students in any one class are often at different levels of literacy and have different educational backgrounds, assessments may sometimes have to be individualized to obtain an accurate picture of a student's knowledge and ability.

Newcomer students who are on or near grade level in their native language (L1), especially Spanish-speaking students, may be given assessments that measure their language skills and content knowledge in the L1. If students who are assessed in their native language enter a bilingual newcomer program, they continue to be assessed in both the L1 and English (L2) as they develop English language proficiency. Even when students take assessments in both the L1 and L2, a complete picture of a student's language and content knowledge may not emerge in the first year or so due to differences in the degree of language dominance between the L1 and L2. Assessing students in both languages requires ongoing examination of how each language is contributing to their overall linguistic and content knowledge.

Cummins (2001) points out that students who are developing biliteracy must not be assessed as if they had "two separate monolingual proficiencies in their heads." One assessment that attempts to estimate the combined L1 and L2 knowledge of bilingual students while recognizing that a student's knowledge is distributed unevenly across the languages is the Bilingual Verbal Abilities Tests (BVAT). The BVAT (available in more than 15 languages) is designed to help in the early diagnosis of a student's level of academic and linguistic knowledge.

When a native language assessment instrument is simply a translation of an L2 assessment, the measure may be invalid due to differences in cultural orientation and language structures and may result in an inaccurate profile of a student's linguistic and academic knowledge. Escamilla & Coady (2001) point out that authentic literacy assessments and rubrics must reflect the forms, functions, and discourse patterns of the language being assessed. Another difficulty arising from assessments in the L1 is that the variety of the language (e.g., dialect)

used for the assessment instrument may differ from the variety that the student uses in his or her native country.

Because of these differences, assessing new immigrant students requires a great deal of individualization and much caution in the interpretation of the test results, especially in reference to academic achievement or potential. Newcomer programs that consider the results of multiple assessment measures in both English and the students' L1 and that seek to examine students' biliteracy development gain a more comprehensive understanding of the students' academic achievement than those who rely only on a single measure.

Recommendations for Future Research

Throughout the course of this project, educators who work with newcomer students have expressed a keen interest in learning more about best practices, instructional strategies, and programmatic designs that have been successful in working with newcomer students with limited or no previous formal schooling. Programs that serve large numbers of such students and that have developed innovative, effective ways of helping them achieve in school should be studied in-depth, and information should be shared with a wide audience of educators.

The most pressing research question that teachers, parents, and policy makers would like addressed is whether students who are served by newcomer programs achieve higher, long-term academic success than students who are placed directly in regular ESL or bilingual programs. The answer to this question is not yet clear from the research, but it may be that it depends on a student's age and educational background.

One way to address this question involves several steps. First, newcomer students must be identified in the district's accountability system and their designation must remain even after they have exited the program in order to examine their long-term progress in school. Second, assessments used in the newcomer program must be the same or comparable with assessments used in the ESL or bilingual programs. Third, the district must develop an evaluation design to compare students in newcomer programs with similar students not placed in those programs. This might involve a design whereby some newcomer students receive instruction through the newcomer program and others enter the ESL or bilingual program. The achievement of the two groups of students would be monitored and examined over the period of several years.

A related research question concerns the best type of newcomer program design to implement. The CAL/CREDE study showed that among the 115 newcomer programs in the

database, very few were identical in their implementation. Most sites developed the programs with their students' needs in mind but without the full picture of options. Now that the program designs have been documented, it may be possible to identify designs that work best for certain groups of students. To do so, however, programs would need to agree on some similar points of comparison, such as using some of the same student assessment measures, in order to determine whether, for example, a separate site program rather than a program-within-a-school might be better for nonliterate, LFS high schoolers.

Furthermore, program designs for newcomers in age groups that fall outside the scope of previous research projects, such as elementary school students or older teenage newcomer students, could be explored in more detail. For instance, because the younger students have more time to learn English and reach grade-level status, might they need less time in newcomer programs than older students? Or, what is the best set of courses for the older learner who is unlikely to meet high school graduation requirements before reaching the maximum age for free public education?

During the newcomer conference and site visits additional areas for future research were identified. The following questions provide some direction for future study:

- Which literacy development strategies are most effective and at which grade levels? Some programs have suggested that upper elementary students may respond better to one set of strategies while teenage students learn better with a different combination of strategies. These differences could be investigated.
- What is the role of native language support? Some programs with native language content courses have made impressive gains in their student scores. As a result, other programs want to know if they should consider bilingual options for content classes while promoting academic English. Moreover, if a program has students from too many different languages for bilingual classes, it may be valuable to determine what type of native language support should be available and how it could be accomplished.
- Does a parent literacy component make a difference? Several programs offer parent literacy components but the effect on the newcomer students' literacy development has not been studied. This could be a fruitful area for further investigation.

- At what level of English proficiency can newcomer students perform well enough on standardized tests written in English to accurately demonstrate their knowledge of different subject areas? Educators need to assess newcomer students in order to make sound instructional decisions for them, but obtaining accurate data for nonliterate students is particularly difficult. Research may be conducted to determine which alternative assessments yield useful information about a newcomer student's learning and what threshold of language proficiency will yield the best information from more commercial or standardized tests.

Summary

Findings for this project for OELA mirrored those of the CAL/CREDE study in terms of the uniqueness of newcomer programs across the United States. Student assessment data provided by the newcomer program sites for this pilot study demonstrate that newcomer students in elementary and secondary school programs are reaching high levels of achievement both academically and linguistically in English and native language proficiency. As a relatively new and unresearched program option, newcomer programs clearly show promise; however, we have much more to learn about the most effective ways to deliver instruction to newcomer students. We do know that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work well in either literacy or assessment practices for newcomers; rather, programs need to build an array of successful strategies that are tailored to the needs of their program and their students. Future research will hopefully give clear guidance as to the most appropriate strategies to employ and the best designs to implement for different groups of newcomer students.

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CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Curriculum Materials

Fast Math Curriculum

Fairfax County Public Schools

1-800-321-6223

<http://www.fcps.edu/dis/OESOL/fastmath.htm>

Fast Track Phonics for Young Adults & Adults

Pearson Education/Longman, White Plains, NY

1-888-877-7824

<http://www.longman.com>

Sonday System

Windsor Learning, Inc., St. Paul, MN

1-800-325-7585

<http://www.sondaysystems.com>

Systematic Sequential Phonics They Use: For Beginning Readers of All Ages

Carson-Dellosa Publishing Company, Greensboro, NC

1-866-552-9590

<http://www.carsondellosa.com>, <http://www.four-blocks.com/system.htm>

Reading Series and Books

Basics Bookshelf Series

Hampton-Brown, Carmel, CA

1-800-933-3510

<http://www.hampton-brown.com/onlinecatalog/products>

High Point ESL: Success in language, literature, content

Hampton-Brown, Carmel, CA

1-800-933-3510

<http://www.hampton-brown.com/onlinecatalog/products.asp?subID=1>

Leap Pad

Leap Pad Learning System, Emeryville, CA

1-800-701-LEAP (5327)

<http://www.leapfrogtoys.com>

Little Red Readers

Sundance Publishers, Littleton, MA

1-800-343-8204

<http://www.sundancepub.com>

National Geographic/Windows on Literacy

National Geographic School Publishing

1-800-368-2728

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/education>

Reading A-Z, 27 leveled readers for ages 4-11
1-520-327-3730
www.readinga-z.com

Reading Expeditions
National Geographic School Publishing
1-800-368-2728
www.nationalgeographic.com/education

Reading Power: Rosen Series
PowerKidsPress
1-800-237-9932
<http://www.powerkidspress.com>

Scott Foresman ESL: Accelerated English Language Learning
Pearson Education/Longman, White Plains, NY
1-888-877-7824
<http://www.longman.com/ae/marketing/sfesl/content.html>

Sunshine Books
Wright Group/McGraw-Hill
1-800-523-2371
<http://www.wrightgroup.com>

Software

ELLIS (English Language Learning Instructional System)
1-888-756-1570
<http://www.ellis.com>

ELLISKids
1-888-756-1570
<http://www.ellis.com>

LightSpan Achieve Now
1-888-888-4314
<http://lightspan.com>

Read 180 Software
1-800-234-READ
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/read180>

Rosetta Stone Software
1-800-788-0822
<http://www.rosettastone.com>

APPENDICES

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence

2002–2003 NEWCOMER PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give information for Elementary (Gr. 1–5) and Secondary (Gr. 6–12) on separate forms.

LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Name: _____

Program Address: _____

Program Phone Number: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Web site: _____

Contact Person's Name and Title: _____

Contact Person's Address (if different from above): _____

Contact Person's Phone (if different from above): _____

Which best describes your community? ☐Urban/metropolitan ☐Suburban ☐Rural

Which best describes your program? ☐Bilingual ☐Native language literacy ☐ESL

NEWCOMER PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Year the **newcomer** program started: _____

Rationale/impetus for establishing the **newcomer** program:

How does the program define "**newcomer**?"

Please describe your **newcomer** program (e.g., goals, program design). If possible, attach an abstract or a program description, or any other literature about your program.

SITE MODEL (Please check **all** that best apply to your **newcomer** program.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole school | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-day program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program-within-a-school | <input type="checkbox"/> Half-day program (# of class periods _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separate site from home school(s) _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than half-day program (# of class periods _____) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> After-school program (# of hours _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summer program (# of weeks _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 1-year program (# of semesters _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1-semester program (# of weeks _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Year-round program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-semester program | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please describe below.) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-year program | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-year plus summer program | |

Is there one or more *home schools* associated with the program; that is, a school students attend when not in the **newcomer** program or will attend upon exit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Serves one home school only ☐ Serves more than one home school (# of schools _____)
If so, please provide name(s), address(es), phone/fax numbers of home school(s):

NEWCOMER PROGRAM FEATURES

☐ Elementary school ☐ Middle school ☐ High school ☐ Combination middle & high ☐ Combination K–12

Grade level(s) served: _____

What are the criteria for students to be included in the **newcomer** program?

If the **newcomer** program does not serve all eligible students, how are students selected for the program?

If eligible students do not enter the **newcomer** program, what other language support programs are available to them in the district?

What criteria are used to determine when students should exit the **newcomer** program?

Maximum stay for students in **newcomer** program (# of semesters): _____ **OR** (# of weeks): _____

Average length of stay (# of semesters): _____ **OR** (# of weeks): _____

Average class size (# of students): _____

Can students enter in mid-year or mid-session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are the funding sources for the **newcomer** program? (Check **all** that apply.) _____

Type of funds: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ District ☐ Private ☐ Tuition ☐ Other: _____

NEWCOMER STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Total number of students in **newcomer** program (1999–2000 school year): _____

Number of countries represented in **newcomer** program: _____

Number of non-English languages represented in **newcomer** student population: _____

Top 5 languages represented among **newcomer** student population:

1. _____ 3. _____ 5. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

The **newcomer** students are drawn from: ☐ One school ☐ More than one school ☐ In-take/assessment center

Age range of **newcomer** students: _____

Percentage of **newcomer** students receiving free or reduced lunch: _____%

Have the types of students served by the **newcomer** program changed over time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain. _____

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Which language or languages are used for instruction? _____

What types of courses does the **newcomer** program provide? (Check **all** that apply.)

☐ Sheltered content in English (Check **all** that apply below.)

____ math _____ language arts
____ science _____ health
____ social studies _____ other: _____

☐ Content instruction in native language(s) (Check **all** that apply below.)

____ math _____ language arts
____ science _____ health
____ social studies _____ other: _____

☐ Cross-cultural/orientation to U.S.

☐ School/study skills

☐ Native language literacy

☐ Career/vocational education

☐ ESL or English language development

☐ Focus on competencies (e.g., life skills, vocational)

☐ Other courses: _____

What type of graduation credits do **high school** students receive for the courses they take in the **newcomer** program? Please list courses for:

elective credit -

core content credit -

What kinds of literacy development strategies are used with the **newcomer** students?

What kind of program do students exit into? ☐ Bilingual ☐ ESL ☐ Mainstream ☐ Other

What measures (if any) are taken to facilitate **newcomer** students' transition into the regular ESL or bilingual school program (e.g., visits to regular ESL/bilingual/mainstream classrooms, orientation) and/or to facilitate their transition into the home school?

In which areas are students in the **newcomer** program assessed, and for what purposes?

Area	Name of Test	Purpose (e.g., placement, progress, achievement, exit)
English speaking		
English listening		
English reading		
English writing		
Native language speaking		
Native language listening		
Native language reading		
Native language writing		
Content in English:		
math		
science		
social studies		
health		
others: _____		

Content in native language(s):		
math		
science		
social studies		
health		
others: _____		

Student attitudes		

Besides testing, how are **newcomer** students assessed?

NEWCOMER PROGRAM STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Please fill in the appropriate information about your **newcomer** program's staff:

	Full-time (in newcomer program)	Part-time (in newcomer program)
Total number of teachers	_____	_____
ESL teachers	_____	_____
Bilingual teachers	_____	_____

Number of **newcomer** teachers with bilingual education certification: _____

Number of **newcomer** teachers with ESL certification or equivalent: _____

Number of **newcomer** teachers with certification in a content area: _____

	Full-time (in newcomer program)	Part-time (in newcomer program)
Program Administrators/Coordinators	_____	_____
Bilingual aides/Paraprofessionals Please indicate languages spoken:	_____	_____
Monolingual aides/Paraprofessionals Please indicate languages spoken:	_____	_____
Resource teacher(s) for newcomers Position(s):	_____	_____

Total **newcomer** staff who are proficient in at least one of the students' native languages: _____

Please describe specific professional development provided to **newcomer** program staff that addresses concerns of **newcomer** students.

What topics, issues, strategies are covered?

Who participates?

Who provides it?

How often is it provided?

Does the **newcomer** program have its own guidance counselor(s)? ☐yes ☐no If yes, how many? _____
 If not, are regular school counselors available to the newcomers? ☐yes ☐no If yes, how many? _____
 Are any counselors for newcomer students bilingual? ☐yes ☐no
 If yes, which languages are spoken? _____

OTHER SERVICES (Please check **all** categories that apply.)

<p>Which types of ancillary services are offered to students in the newcomer program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Title I</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Special education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and talented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health (physical)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health (mental)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Day care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Legal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Career counseling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships with community</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">If so, please list your partners: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	<p>Which services are offered to others associated with the newcomer program (e.g., parents)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parent outreach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adult ESL courses</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Native language literacy courses</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Orientation to USA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Orientation to US schools</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adult basic education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> School liaison with parents</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Information sharing with community organizations</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships with community</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">If so, please list your partners: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
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Tell about aspects of your **newcomer** program that are working especially well:

Thank you for assisting us in this research initiative. Please provide any other comments or information you consider important or interesting about your **newcomer** program. (Attach extra pages or documents, as needed.)

Please fill in the following information (if different from the information on the first page):

Name: _____

Title/Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Place a check mark in the box if you would like to be on our mailing list. ☐

We are gathering additional information in these areas. Please help us by answering the following questions as completely as you can.

Literacy

1. What instructional practices has your program found most useful for developing reading skills?
2. What staffing strategies has your program found most useful for developing reading skills?
3. What literacy materials do you use?
4. Could your literacy development practices be a model for other newcomer sites?

Assessment

1. For placement, how does your program measure students'
 - a. reading skills?
 - b. ELD/ESL?
 - c. background content knowledge?
2. How does the information from the placement assessments influence the quality of instruction?

3. What are the assessment instruments you have found most effective in measuring students progress in
 - a. reading?
 - b. ELD/ESL?
 - c. other content knowledge?
4. How does your program use the results of progress assessments to prepare students for transition out of the newcomer program?
5. Are your students required to take the state standards tests? If so, which ones?

Mail or fax this questionnaire to:

Beverly Boyson
Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th St., NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859
202-362-3740 (fax)

Thank you!

GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Advanced Placement Program (AP). 1955. Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ

The AP program is designed to assess achievement in introductory college-level calculus courses so that high school students, upon taking the AP course and passing the test can expect colleges and universities to grant advanced placement.

Calculus AB and Calculus BC. 1993.

This Calculus AP test is divided between a multiple-choice section (45 items) and a free-response section (6 problems that require students to show how they arrived at their answers). The time allotted for each section is 90 minutes.

Spanish Language. 1993.

The Spanish Language AP test is designed to assess achievement in college level third-year Spanish. Objective questions on listening and reading, and free response writing and speaking comprise the test. The number of items may vary each year.

Spanish Literature. 1983.

The Spanish Literature AP test is designed to assess achievement in college level third-year Spanish. Objective questions on listening, reading, and literary analysis comprise part of the test; two essays in Spanish on required authors and one (in Spanish or English) on presented poems are also required. The number of items may vary each year.

Aprenda. 1990. The Psychological Corporation, San Antonio, TX.

Aprenda is a multiple-choice achievement test in Spanish designed to measure reading and math knowledge of students in American schools whose native language is Spanish. Test levels range from Pre-primary to Intermediate III for Grades K–9.

Bilingual Verbal Abilities Test (BVAT). No date. Riverside Publishing, Chicago, IL.

The BVAT measures the cognitive/academic language skills of bilingual individuals in English and another language. Available in 18 languages, the BVAT assesses a student's combined knowledge in both languages. The test is comprised of three subtests (Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, and Verbal Analogies) and is designed for students, Grades K–12.

Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills. 1983. Curriculum Associates, Inc., North Billerica, MA.

Designed primarily for Grades 1–9, the Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills is of value to programs that individualize instruction and serve special needs students. The test sections are Readiness, Speech, Reading Comprehension, Functional Word Recognition, Oral Reading, Spelling, Word Analysis, Listening, Word Recognition Grade Placement, Reference Skills, Math Grade Placement, Numbers, Number Facts, Computation of Whole Numbers, Fractions and Mixed Numbers, Metrics, Decimals, Percents, Word Problems, Graphs and Maps, Math Vocabulary, and Writing.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT). No date. CTB/McGraw-Hill, Monterey, CA.

The purpose of the CELDT is to identify new ELLs, assess progress of ELLs, and determine ESL program exit. The CELDT assesses listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and classifies students into five levels of English language proficiency: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced.

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). No date. Celebration Press/Pearson Learning Group, Parsippany, NJ.

The DRA evaluates students' continuous development of reading skills, including beginning literacy development, fluency, and comprehension. When administering the DRA, teachers create running records of student reading skills as students read from leveled benchmark books. DRA is intended for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

Degrees of Reading Power (DRP). 1996. Touchstone Applied Science, Brewster, NY.

The DRP assessments use a cloze format and are standardized tests designed to assess reading comprehension in Grades 4–12. Students read non-fiction English prose passages at different levels of difficulty, that have words or sentences deleted from them. Five grammatically correct and semantically plausible options are presented for each deletion, all of which are related to the theme of the passage.

FAST (Focus on Achievement Standards in Teaching) Math Test. No date. Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, VA.

The FAST Math Test is based on the Fairfax County Public Schools' program of studies for math. It assigns a grade-level equivalent score for Grades 1–8 and may be used for placement. The test is available in 40 languages.

Gates-MacGinitie. 1989. Riverside Publishing, Chicago, IL.

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests are norm-referenced and are used to measure reading achievement for students in Grades K–12. Nine levels of the test are available.

IDEA Language Proficiency Tests (IPT) (English and Spanish versions). 1991. Ballard & Tighe Publishers, Brea, CA.

The IPT tests measure reading, writing, and oral proficiency in English and Spanish for children from preschool through 12th grade. They are mainly used for placement of non-native speakers. The tests are administered individually using a book with pictures. The domains tested are syntax, morphological structure, lexical items, phonological structure, comprehension, and oral production.

IMAGE. 1997. Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield, IL.

The IMAGE (Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English) assessment is designed to document the growth in English proficiency in reading and writing of students in Grades 3–11 who are English language learners. IMAGE reading scores are reported on a 0–500 scale. Writing scores are reported on a 5–26 scale and contain average feature scores for language production, focus, support, organization, and mechanics.

Key Math. 1988. American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, MN.

Key Math is a content-referenced test for children in Grades K–9. It measures 13 domains: numeration, rational numbers, geometry, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, mental computation, measurement, time and money, estimation, interpreting data, and problem solving.

La Prueba de Realización. 1991. Riverside Publishing, Chicago, IL.

La Prueba de Realización is a Spanish language achievement test that has nine levels spanning Grades K–12. It has subtests in reading, writing skills, mathematics, social studies, and science.

Language Assessment Battery (LAB) (English and Spanish versions). 1982. NYC Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY.

The LAB, a language proficiency test for K–12 students, was developed for the curriculum of the New York City school system. The test is primarily used for placement and has four levels: Level I, Grades K–2; Level II, Grades 3–5; Level III, Grades 6–8; and Level IV, Grades 9–12. Each level contains four sections: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The Spanish version is used to determine language of dominance and to evaluate programs with large numbers of Spanish-speaking students. Both versions of the LAB have short forms available.

Language Assessment Scales (LAS) (English and Spanish versions). 1990. CTB/McGraw Hill, Monterey, CA.

The LAS are composed of two batteries, the LAS R/W (reading and writing) and the LAS Oral. The LAS R/W may be used alone or in combination with the LAS Oral. The English version of the test is for students in Grades 2–12 whose native language is not English and the Spanish version is for students whose native language is not Spanish. The LAS has three levels: Level 1, Grades 2–3; Level 2, Grades 4–6; and Level 3, Grade 7 and higher.

Maculaitis Assessment of Competencies II (MAC II). 2001. Touchstone Applied Science, Brewster, NY.

The MAC II evaluates the English listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies of students in Grades K–12. The test consists of four subtests, one for each language skill. A 10-minute MAC II screening instrument is also available, and is designed for new LEP students entering a school system.

New York State Regents Exams. 1995. University of the State of New York.

Passing the New York State Regents Exams (e.g., earth science, biology) is a requirement for high school graduation in the state of New York.

Pre-LAS (Pre-Language Assessment Scales). 1985. CTB/McGraw-Hill, Monterey, CA.

Available in English and Spanish, the Pre-LAS is designed to measure the expressive and receptive language abilities of children in Grades PreK–1. Administration of the Pre-LAS takes approximately 10 minutes and involves children following oral directions in a “Simon Says” activity, pointing to pictures of objects, labeling objects in a drawing of a house, repeating sentences, finishing sentences, and retelling a story. Children are scored and placed into three categories: Non-English Speakers, Limited English Speakers, and Fluent (Proficient) English Speakers.

Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). 1990. American Testronics, Iowa City, IA.

QRI is an informal inventory designed to provide diagnostic information for students in Grades K–9. Although it is not norm-referenced or standardized, it identifies conditions that result in successful/unsuccessful decoding and/or comprehension. Administered individually, this assessment provides a number of diagnostic options: a classroom teacher may use it to determine effective reading groups or textbook placement, a reading specialist may qualify students for exceptional education services or suggest directions for remedial instruction, and a reading clinician may compile a diagnostic profile of a reading disabled student.

Reading Proficiency Test of English (RPTE). 1999. Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX.

The RPTE measures students’ reading proficiency levels in English. There are three possible scores: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. The RPTE is administered to students

in Grades 3–12 in Texas to determine whether or not a student will take the statewide standardized test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE). 1991. CTB/McGraw Hill, Monterey, CA.

SABE is a Spanish achievement test for students in Grades 1–8 who are in an educational program in which Spanish is the language of instruction. The test has six levels: Level 1 (Grade 1), Level 2 (Grades 1–2), Level 3 (Grades 2–3), Level 4 (Grades 3–4), Level 5 (Grades 4–6), and Level 6 (Grades 6–8). Each level has subtests in reading, math, language, and spelling.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). No date. Student Assessment Division, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX.

The TAAS was the state-mandated, criterion-referenced testing program in reading, writing, and math until 2002, and was revised each year for Grades 3–8 and 10–12. Passing these exit-level tests in English was required for graduation. These tests were offered two times during the school year (three times for 12th graders) and once during the summer.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). 2002. Student Assessment Division, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX.

The TAKS is the state-mandated, criterion-reference testing program for Texas students as of 2003. The TAKS is aligned with the statewide standards and is designed to reflect a more accurate measure of student learning than the TAAS.

Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). 2000. Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX.

The TPRI measures students' reading development. It includes sections that measure the learner's grapho-phonemic knowledge, phonemic awareness, word reading skills, book and print awareness, listening comprehension, reading accuracy, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. TPRI is designed for children in Grades K–2, and it meant to be administered one-on-one by the classroom teacher.

Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey (English and Spanish versions). 1993. Riverside Publishing, Chicago, IL.

The Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey, English version, is a set of tests that measure proficiency in oral language, reading, and writing in ESL speakers who are at least 2 years of age. It provides scores for individual skills as well as an overall language competence score called Broad English Ability. The Spanish version samples oral proficiency, reading, and writing in Spanish for native speakers 2–90 years of age. Raw scores can be converted to appropriate age or grade norms and an accompanying narrative describes students' academic language proficiency.

Wide Range Achievement Test I and II (WRAT I and II). No date. Jastak Assessment Systems, Wilmington, DE.

WRAT I and II are restandardizations of the Wide Range Achievement Test. Level I is designed for children ages 5–11. Level II is for people ages 12–74. The purpose of the WRAT is to measure the codes needed to learn the basic skills of reading, spelling, and arithmetic.

Additional information for most of these assessment instruments is available at the following web site: <http://ericae.net>